BING

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THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

BING MAGAZINE (INCORPORATING BINGANG)

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

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Web sites:

Club:	www.club-crosby.org
BING magazine:	http.//members.aol.com/macwilmslo/BING_magazine.html
Bing Crosby Internet Museum:	www.kcmetro.edu/~crosby/

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(a) American and Canadian members who should send their remittances in U.S. dollars to F. B. Wiggins
(b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor or the American Co-Editor.

Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should either be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer or to your local representative please.

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EDITORIAL

The first few months of any new year are always a good time to take a look back at the year gone by. To ruminate over where we've been and contemplate where we're heading. If 2004 is any indication, we're definitely heading in the right direction. The past several years have been amazing, with so much widespread renewed interest in Bing. New examinations of his life and work, garnering him much critical acclaim and respect for his accomplishments and his significance as an artist. Who could've imagined, twenty-seven years after he left us, that there would be a chain of restaurants named in his honor? Or that he'd be digitally brought back to life to create brand new performances with singers who hadn't even been born yet in 1977.

A great deal of this resurgence can be attributed to the efforts of our Honorary President. Kathryn Crosby had an incredibly busy year. With her boundless energy, she crossed the United States many times over, appearing at dozens of book signings and other events honoring her husband virtually non-stop throughout the year. Each of these events was well attended by both new and seasoned fans alike. A few of the many highlights include her appearances at the Donnell Media Center, at Fort Hamilton's Army Base, even on Tony Danza's television show. Details of these (and of her other appearances) can be found elsewhere in this magazine.

Now, with forthcoming events honoring Bing at New York's Lincoln Center and at the Museum of TV and Radio, 2005 promises to be an equally exciting and productive year. With high profile events such as these, we can be assured that Bing's memory and entertainment legacy will continue to thrive for many years to come.

Greg Van Beek

Yes, Greg is right. It is very encouraging to have these Crosby events taking place and we must endeavour to build on these.

May I extend a special welcome to Phil Crosby's son, Phillip, who has joined us as an honorary member. I had the pleasure of meeting Phil at Gonzaga and it's good to have him on board.

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of **Lionel Pairpoint** who played such a vital part in the ICC after the relaunch of BING magazine in 1989. A tribute to Lionel can be found in a subsequent page. Also we have to report the loss of **Virgil Edwards** of Eugene, Oregon, who was 92 when he died in February. We featured Virgil's recollections of listening to the Old Gold and Cocoanut Grove broadcasts by Bing in BING magazine #122.

This issue of the magazine is packed with articles from lots of different people from all over the world and it is a real delight to have so much material available for selection. Mind you, it does mean that some hard choices have to be made each time and my apologies to those of you whose contribution has not been used this time.

Our thanks are again due to Jon Oye for providing our back cover picture which shows Bing's sit-com family. The front cover comes from Ron Bosley's collection and we are also indebted to Arthur Blood for releasing the letter he received from Bing for our inside back cover. What a correspondent Bing was! I don't think that there has ever been anyone in show business who was such a fluent writer as Bing. By setting up his office to reply to the many fans who wrote to him from all over the world, he cemented their support for the rest of their lives. The number of letters he dealt with personally using his Dictaphone must have been immense too.

See you in the summer!

Malcolm Macfarlane

CONTENTS

	Page Nos.
Editorial	3
Secretary / Treasurer's Report	4
Lionel Pairpoint	6
Bing Won't Be Home	7
Bing's 'White Christmas'	8
Bringing The Voice of Xmas Back To Prime Time	9
Looking Back: Bing Before Brunswick	16
Trading Post	17
Books 'n' Bing	21
Bing-ing Around	22
Celluloid Crosby	22
The A - Z of Bing's Movies	25
Bing Crosby's Restaurant Opens	28
The MCA Legal Battle (update)	29
One Sweet Letter From You	30
Bing's Declining Fortunes	31
Frank Sinatra Jr talks of Bing	32
A Renaissance In Bloom	33
Sardi's	38
Conversation With Ted	38
Remembering Bing in New York, 1976	39
Bing On The Box	41
Once In A While	44
Sister Mary Francis Moore 1928 - 2005	45
The Crosby Years	46
The Most Popular Entertainer of the 20th Century	47
Keeping Track	49
Bing Looks Ahead	52

SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

Each spring report provides your secretary with an opportunity to reflect on the past year's accomplishments and achievements of the ICC and to thank team members and contributors for their dedicated work on behalf of the club's enthusiastic membership.

2004 has been another successful year for the ICC and it gives me great pleasure to thank **Malcolm, Wayne, Wig, David** and **Greg** not forgetting our band of knowledgeable contributors for their impassioned and inspiring work in bringing us the best magazine of its kind, in the world.

Additionally, I would like to thank John McNicholas and his team of collectors for their resolve and enthusiasm in bringing us the **'Chronological Bing Crosby'**. John is passionate about preserving Bing's commercial recordings on CD and we thank him for bringing us 830 masters to date. Issues 36 and 37 are available now and the next two CDs are being prepared.

Sadly, there is one great contributor who will not be reading this tribute -

Lionel Pairpoint.

Malcolm has a nice tribute to this modest man who carried out much dedicated work on behalf of Bing Crosby collectors and admirers. His two books will be a permanent reminder of just how committed and knowledgeable he was, not only about Bing Crosby, but also about the music scene in general. Lionel's articles brought tears of laughter to many members. We will miss him and we extend our thoughts and condolences to Joyce Pairpoint.

Michael presents Lionel with a bound copy of his wonderful radio book.

NEW MEMBERS

New members are vital to the continuing success of the International Club Crosby and we are delighted to welcome the following to membership of the club.

Great Britain
Ed Paine (Ryde, Isle Of Wight), Edwin Cox (Bristol), Syd Woods (Haddington, East Lothian), Stanley Warburton (Edinburgh)

United States (Former ICC members who were also members of Club Crosby) Marcia Kulka (Rockford, Illinois), Melody Larsen (Grand Junction, Iowa), Richard Lewis (Painted Post, New York), Harry Lichtenbaum (Wethersfield, Connecticut), Steve Marsella (Cliffside Park, New Jersey), Dolores Mayo (Toms River, New Jersey), George McMabe (Belleville, Illinois), James McCusker (North Reading, Massachusetts), Donald McLean (Riverside, Rhode Island), Roger Mesiano (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania), Mary Montalto (Methuen, Massachusetts), Donald Mounce (Springfield, Oregon), Donald Moxham, (Kingston, New York), Wayne Nale (Dallas, Texas), Joseph Nocera (Flushing, New York), Dolores Onorato (Hackensack, New Jersey), Art & Jim Palumbo (Colonia, New Jersey), Robert Pasch (Phoenix, Arizona), Beatrice Pifer (Flint, Michigan), Allison Richardson (Goshen, Kentucky), Frank Rodgers (Yountville, California), James Sefcik (Joliet, Illinois), Dan Singer (New York, New York), Kelly Smith (Newark, Delaware), Frederick Tauber (North Riverside, Illinois), Dale Thielker (St. Louis, Missouri), William Thonebe (Madison, New Jersey), Eleanor Treffinger (Franklin, Wisconsin), Joseph Vance

(Lombard, Illinois), Don Vanderschoot (Napa, California), Pat Vignola (Lincoln Park, Michigan), Edward Wanat (Cheektowaga, New York), Kenneth Winters (Gales Ferry, Connecticut), Henry Zecher (Rockville, Maryland), Stanley Ziminski (Massapequa, New York), Lloyd Zimmer (Eugene, Oregon).

DONATIONS

One of the privileges of being the secretary of the ICC is that I receive an annual big 'thank you' from some very generous members. Many of these members feel that although they do not contribute materially to the ICCs work, they would like to help financially. We are grateful to the following for their support and generosity.

The Rev. Michael Collins, Paul Hennessy, Gerard Hanlon, Donald Bostock, Tim Page, Charles H Hall, Jim Watt and Hazel Nunn have made exceptional gifts and they are supported by:

A Pope, A Lee, Y Bowles, D Spong, H C Ross, C Hall, J C Hobday, Mrs V Campbell, Jeremy Rose, S Lawrence, W Oldfield, A Sherlow, G Robinson, R Larkin, J Davis, M Conroy, J Stiles, J W Bignell, J Rainey, M Sprott, M Beardmore, D Saville, N Palmer, Klaus Halm, R Gould, E Gits, D Hellier, J Manton, D McNamee, T White, W A Green, L Farrell, E Dermott, R W T Addey, J Byrne, G Patmore, I Arnott, T Maher, B Sellers, M North, G Owen, R Irvine, C Colindridge, Dr Thomas Hirschmann, P Monaghan, T Carpenter, G O'Reilly, S Crellin, B Bishop, R Holder, H Hanke, J Russell, B Wesley, R Field, F Brannigan, B England, R Moss, K Mason, R Uppman, D Perkins.

DEATHS

With great sadness I draw members' attention to the passing of the following members.

Lionel Pairpoint (Mill Hill, London), Bert Day (Castle Douglas, Scotland), Stan Austin (Bournemouth, Dorset), Christopher Sullivan (Yate, Gloucestershire), Virgil Edwards (Eugene, Oregon), Sister Mary Francis Moore (Brooklyn, New York).

Virgil Edwards was a dedicated and long time collector of Bing Crosby and you may recall that Virgil was one of the few members who could remember and relate listening to Bing in his formative years. It was my pleasure to meet Virgil and his late friend, Sam Fleshman at Gonzaga in 2003 and to share with them my love of Bing Crosby's work. I am humbled that our paths crossed.

Bert Day was a premier collector who, sadly, spent his last years in a nursing home in Palnackie, Castle Douglas, Scotland and unfortunately he had no immediate family to take care of his collection on his demise. The nursing home staff are therefore selling his collection on eBay.

Sister Mary Francis Moore impressed us all at the Hofstra event and please see the separate tribute from Al O'Hagan.

To the family and friends of Lionel, Bert, Virgil, Stan, Sister Mary Francis and Christopher we extend our very sincere condolences.

CALENDAR 2005

I would like to thank all who have supported the calendar this year and special thanks to Ron Bosley for his work in producing our annual photographic tribute to Bing. There are around 50 calendars left for sale and we would appreciate members purchasing these to help support club funds. Please contact Wig, David or myself for your copy.

MEMBERSHIP

At the time of writing (February 22) around 195 members have still to renew their membership. Wig and I will be writing to these members to request them to continue their membership and as in previous years most will do so and they will be very contrite about their lateness in sending their dues. We, of course, understand that a few members will have been ill and hence unable to be in contact, others will just have forgotten to renew. All late payers will be very welcome and all Wig and I ask is that you pay early next year.

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 12 MONTHS TO 31st DECEMBER 2004

Income	£	Expenditure	£
Subscriptions and donations	10103	Production of BING magazine	8885
Sales - Calendars	1853	Calendars	1780
Leeds meeting - receipts	331	AGM (Leeds) costs	350
Sales - Jonzo CDs	42	Secretarial costs	116
Sales - Back issues	118	Jonzo CDs	105
Sales - Books	714	Editorial costs	18
Bank Interest 2004	8	Sundries	48
Bank balance 31/12/2003	5738	Bank balance 31/12/2004	7605
	18907		18907

Notes:

1. The accounts are a simple unaudited Income and Expenditure summary and amounts owing and stocks of books and CDs held are not shown. Funds held on a temporary basis by the various international representatives are not shown either.

2. The club is able to cover its anticipated expenditure in 2005.

LEEDS 2005 - ADVANCE NOTICE

This will be my 40th annual tribute to Bing in Leeds and I hope to see many new attendees along with some old friends who have not been able to attend in recent years. **Sunday October 2nd is the date to note in your diary.** Until summer, my best wishes to all members around the world, with gratitude for your support and interest in the International Club Crosby.

Michael Crampton

Lionel Pairpoint

Lionel died on January 22, a few days before his 77th birthday. His mother had died earlier in the same week, age 97. His funeral took place at Hendon Crematorium on February 2 and your Editor was asked to say a few words to the packed chapel, which included ICC members Trevor Wagstaff and Des Hellier. I feel that I can do no better than reproduce those words here.

"Lionel and I met over 20 years ago through our mutual admiration of Bing Crosby. A mutual admiration which Joyce used to call our obsession! We were at a Crosby function at a posh hotel and we were both queuing to purchase a very expensive beer. We struck up a conversation about the ridiculous prices and became firm friends thereafter.

Lionel had a fascination for Bing's radio work which he painstakingly researched over many years. I shared this interest and soon he was sharing the fruits of his investigations with me. Many years later, we worked together to get it all published in his wonderful book "And Here's Bing". This book has become the accepted world-wide authoritative work on Bing's radio career and it's recently been published on the Internet.

But I'm not telling you much about Lionel the man I knew. Lionel had a wonderful sense of humour which revealed itself to Bing Crosby fans all over the world through the witty and clever series of 37 articles he wrote for BING magazine. His writing was of a standard that would have graced the pages of *Punch* or *The Spectator*. However all of the articles had to be virtually prised out of him as he was convinced that they weren't any good and that no-one would really be interested in them. Typically in these articles he would start off in a semi-autobiographical vein talking about miscellaneous subjects such as his teenage ambition to be a great actor, his mother, the Saturday morning picture show, his teachers, his National Service, his health, his Uncle Walter (don't call me Wally) and his experiences in amateur dramatics and then he would switch to a Bing Crosby topic. It was wonderful stuff.

Lionel was a real character if ever there was one. Always willing to have a go at those in authority, he wrote some of the best complaint letters you've ever seen, to all sorts of concerns. For years, he had an amusing notice by his front door warning uninvited door-to-door salesmen of dire consequences and the answer-phone message he put together was a typical Lionel effort. Often groaning with aches and pains, he was a self-confessed hypochondriac who for the 20 years I knew him was convinced that he was dying of a dread disease. I can imagine him smiling down at me now and saying "I told you I was ill!"

A caring and gentle man at heart, he loved his family, his fishing and his cricket. His knowledge about old songs of all types was encyclopaedic and he was working on a book about the songs of World War 2 before he became ill. He assembled an incredible collection of reference books on the subject of the popular song which is far better than those held by most libraries.

Lionel's passing has been marked with tributes from Crosby fans all over the world. He was a veritable giant in the Bing Crosby universe and we are all going to miss him. I shall miss him as a friend and I'll remember such sundry things as his unsuccessful attempts to befriend our cat, his wonderful impression of W. C. Fields and the dinner parties at our house when Lionel, fuelled by his favourite dessert wine entertained us in an hilarious fashion.

Lionel, Rest In Peace."

Lionel had the opportunity to choose the music to be played at his funeral. We all entered the chapel to the strains of Glenn Miller's version of 'Stardust' and midway through the ceremony Bing's version of 'Just a Gigolo' was played. At the conclusion, Lionel had selected Bing singing with the Firehouse 5, 'Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone'. Typical Lionel humour. He will be sadly missed.

Malcolm Macfarlane

Grammy Hall of Fame

A press release on January 19 gave us the good news that Bing's recording of 'Brother, Can You Spare A Dime' was to be inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame on February 13. The Recording Academy's National Trustees established the GRAMMY Hall Of Fame in 1973 to honor recordings of lasting qualitative or historical significance that are at least 25 years old. Winners are selected annually by a special member committee of eminent and knowledgeable professionals from all branches of the recording arts.

"This year's inductees represent an array of genres including traditional pop, rock, reggae, and jazz," said Recording Academy President Neil Portnow. "They exemplify some of the best qualities that make the recording arts such a vital part of our culture: the ability to transcend time, and the power to inspire emotion, whether it be joyous, patriotic, or simply romantic."

The Grammy Hall of Fame now contains 659 titles including four others of Bing's, namely, 'Don't Fence Me In', 'Pennies From Heaven', 'Swinging On A Star' and, of course, 'White Christmas'.

It would be nice to see 'Silent Night', 'Please', 'True Love', 'Well, Did You Evah!' and 'Only Forever', to name but a few, in the Hall of Fame too.

Bing did of course receive a Lifetime Achievement Grammy in 1962.

Gold Records

In BING #137 (page 35), we considered the Recording Industry Association of America (the RIAA) and its system of certifying best selling records. It was with

great pleasure that we noticed that the RIAA issued a press release on December 6 which included the following:

> *Legendary crooner Bing Crosby earned the second multi-Platinum award of his career when the classic album White Christmas was certified Gold, Platinum and quadruple Platinum for sales of more than four million copies.*

Presumably Decca/MCA/Universal registered this with the RIAA and our grateful thanks are due to them for obtaining this recognition for this reissue of Bing's famous Christmas album which has of course already been honoured under its previous title of 'Merry Christmas'.

Bing get-together

In our last issue, we mentioned that **Barry Whittingham** was going to hold a Bing gathering in Nottingham in the UK on February 13. Amongst those who expressed an interest in attending were a number who suggested that the event should be held in May to coincide with Bing's date of birth. Barry has therefore switched the date to Sunday, May 8. The event will probably be held at Barry's home unless numbers suggest a change to an outside venue. Those interested please contact Barry at El Rancho Grande, 25c Garton Close, Cinderhill, Nottingham NG8 8RZ (phone: 0115 913 4240, e-mail: barry.whittingham@ntlworld.com)

Your Editor is always pleasantly surprised by the coverage Bing receives at Christmas time in all sections of the media. I have a daily Google News Alert which gives me details of Bing's appearances in newspapers on the Internet from all over the world and there is always a tremendous surge just prior to Christmas. Many of the articles are rather old-hat to us Crosby aficionados but one I quite liked was an amusing article by Lewis Grizzard which appeared on the Macon Daily.com web page (Middle Georgia's home page) on December 5th. and is now reproduced on below.

YOURS headlines Bing

It was a nice surprise to find that the special Christmas edition of *Yours* magazine in the UK had Bing on the front cover and a nice 5-page article about him inside. Pretty accurate too so it was obviously written by someone who knew more than just the basic facts. Wonderful publicity.

Bing Won't Be Home...

MACON,GA.- I went out to buy some Christmas music. What I like to do during Christmas is build a fire, sit by it and listen to, as the radio announcers say, songs of the season. What I really wanted was Bing Crosby. Christmas comes and I normally think of Bing Crosby singing "White Christmas" and "I'll be Home for Christmas."

I went into one of those stores that carries albums and tapes. One of the sales clerks, a girl perhaps 11 years old, waited on me.

"I'd like to see some Christmas tapes," I said.

"Any particular artist?" she asked.

"Yes, I'd like to see some Bing Crosby."

"You mean Crosby, Stills and Nash?"

"No," I continued. "Bing Crosby. You know, Hope's pal. 'The Bells of St. Mary's' and all that."

"I'm afraid we don't carry Ben Crosby," the girl said.

"Not 'Ben,'" I tried to explain. "It's 'Bing.' He smoked a pipe and . . ."

"I'll get my supervisor," said the clerk. That's

more like it, I thought. At least now I could deal with an adult.

"There is a problem, sir?" asked the supervisor. He might have been 19.

"No problem. I just want to buy a couple of Bing Crosby Christmas tapes. My dog ate the old ones."

"Would this Crisby . . . "

"Crosby."

"I'm sorry. Would this Crosby be rock, country and western or rhythm and blues?"

"I can't believe this," I said. "Bing Crosby was one of the greatest singers who ever lived. His Christmas music is legendary. You mean to say you've never heard of Bing Crosby?"

"He must have been a little before my time," the supervisor explained. "We do have a rather extensive list of Christmas albums and tapes by other artists, however. Would you like to see some of them?"

"Sure," I said. "How about Perry Como? Do you have any Perry Como?"

"No, but we do have Nasty Ned and His Nine Nasty Nose Pickers and their Christmas album, 'Rock Around the Christmas Tree Until You Throw Up.'"

"No, thanks. How about Andy Williams?"

"I don't think we have that, either. But we do have Stark Nekkid and the Car Thieves and their latest, 'Santa Got Caught in my Chimney and the Bats Ate Him.'"

"Johnny Mathis?"

"Nope."

"Roger Whitaker?"

"Afraid not."

"Robert Goulet?"

"Never heard of him."

"Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gorme?"

"Aren't they on 'Hart to Hart?'"

"Forget it," I finally said. "Just show me where you keep all your Christmas music and I'll make a decision." I wound up buying "The Chipmunks' Christmas." They aren't Bing Crosby, but for small, burrowing animals, they don't sing half bad.

Lewis Grizzard

(Editor: So typical of the type of situation we have all experienced. Our thanks to Mr. Grizzard and Macon Daily.com

Frank Brannigan of Dublin, Ireland, sent us a clipping of a perceptive radio review from the Irish Independent newspaper of December 18 which reads as follows.)

Crosby is still a cracker

Among the blizzard of Christmas songs blowing out of the radio this past few weeks, the only one I never quite tire of hearing again is Irving Berlin's classic 'White Christmas', as sung by Bing Crosby.

It was nice to see 'Silverscreen Crackers' (BBC Radio4, Mon, 3:45 p.m.) reconnecting the song with it's origin: the 1942 Crosby-Fred Astaire film *Holiday Inn* and not, as is often presumed, the latter and lesser semi-remake (again starring Crosby) named after the song.

White Christmas, the film, has eclipsed *Holiday Inn* as a perennial TV favourite, possibly because its kitschy, Norman Rockwellish Technicolor images lend themselves better to the season than stark 1940s black and white.

Although 'Silverscreen Crackers' — featuring reminiscences by Berlin's daughter, Linda — never dealt with it in any great detail, *Holiday Inn's* gradual fall from favour mirrors the way Crosby's broader musical legacy has been overlooked in recent times. There's a strong argument for crediting Crosby, rather than Sinatra, who came on the scene slightly later, as the one who established the modern phenomenon of the pop star.

Crosby shifted effortlessly between jazz, swing and several other genres, all things to all audiences, and was the world's most popular male recording artist five years in a row. Yet, he's remembered, if in fact he's remembered at all other than at Christmas, for that song...With Robbie Williams, Rod Stewart and Westlife plundering the great American songbook, a reinvestigation of Crosby is overdue. Radio would be the perfect place...

Pat Stacey

(Editor: And so say all of us!

One article I didn't like wasn't on the 'Net' but was contained in the Review section of the UK's The Mail On Sunday *on December 26. A full page picture of Bing fishing was accompanied by the headline*

'But I can't marry you,' said Bing. 'I've left my wig at home'.

The by-line said:

The Star's widow tells how, despite his urbane image, Bing Crosby was insecure, ashamed of his baldness and jug ears, and only happy when hunting, fishing or playing golf...

The article, which spread over 4 pages was headed "By Kathryn Crosby". In fact, it seemed to me that someone had glanced through Kathryn's books and then re-written whole chunks to slap into an article. Paragraph headings such as "A passionate man with a short temper" and "He invested in horses... which rarely won" perhaps convey the hatchet job.

Martin McQuade subsequently mentioned the article to Kathryn and she indicated that she merely gave a staff person an interview to coincide with Christmas. She had not seen the printed story and she seemed quite surprised that the article bore her byline. She was particularly dismayed by the unfortunate banner headline.

Finally, in our look at Bing in the newspapers last Christmas, here's an interesting article from the Washington Times of December 24)

Bing's 'White Christmas'

by Diana West of The Washington Times

I'm not exactly sure why it is that Bing Crosby's recording of "White Christmas" by Irving Berlin remains an indispensable audio-heirloom of the season, dusted off and played each year now for more than 60 Christmases. It's not that Berlin wasn't one of the pre-eminent composers of the American popular song; that Crosby wasn't the pre-eminent voice of the American popular song; or that "White Christmas" isn't a perfectly

luscious ballad in that long lost tradition. It's in the long-lostness of the tradition that the mystery arises: Why does an antique Berlin ballad written in 1942 still sound like Christmas to Americans in 2004?

I wonder this because there's no room at the pop-cultural inn for the rest of the oeuvre—the thousands of songs by Berlin and his brothers in musical genius: Jerome Kern, George Gershwin, Richard Rodgers, Cole Porter, Harold Arlen, Arthur Schwartz, Burton Lane, Jimmy Van Heusen and others who created the American popular song in the first half of the 20th century. Thanks to the great lyricists—Berlin and Porter, of course, who also wrote lyrics, Ira Gershwin, Lorenz Hart, Yip Harburg, Johnny Mercer, Howard Dietz, Johnny Burke, and others—the American popular song also gave expression to a richly nuanced range of emotion to which contemporary music is sadly tone-deaf. But even contemporary ears hear something in that old Crosby record.

I went poking around assorted Crosby-Berliniana looking for an epiphany (epophany?) to explain why this one song survived the original culture war, the one in the 1950s that pit new rock n' roll vs. not-so-old pop. Interestingly enough, "White Christmas," which debuted in 1942 in the musically terrific (songs by Berlin) if flawed Bing Crosby-Fred Astaire vehicle *Holiday Inn*, wasn't a turning point for anyone concerned. Their reputations, already golden, were merely burnished. That's not to say the song wasn't an enormous hit, particularly during the rest of World War II, when its lilting poignance—and, as musicologist Alec Wilder notes, its "truly daring succession of notes in the chromatic phrase of the main strain" resonated with our troops overseas in ways Berlin couldn't at first imagine. The Crosby version became "the most popular record ever," writes Crosby biographer Gary Giddins, "the only single to make American pop charts twenty times, every year but one between 1942 and 1962."

We all know rock vanquished the old pop song. Indeed, the triumph of rock culture is complete to the point that there exists no memory of pop culture B.E. (Before Elvis). But it's not Elvis' pulsating rendition of "White Christmas" that dominates today's holiday playlist. This quirk of culture would no doubt tickle Berlin, who early on peered into the deepening chasm between rock and pop and didn't like what he saw.

Indeed, in 1957, Berlin asked assistants to telephone radio stations across the country to urge them not to play Elvis' "White Christmas." Which was a little like asking a hurricane to stop the rain in more ways than one. While Bing and Elvis were giants in their successive heydays, it is only Elvis who lives on in our rock-dominated culture. In her evocative memoir "Girl Singer," Rosemary Clooney, having noted that the two singers died weeks apart in 1977, explained their respective legacies this way: "It is ironic, and saddening, more than twenty years later, Elvis is still a presence in the American consciousness, while only aficionados still make an icon of Bing." Except, maybe, at Christmas. Elvis may lead Forbes' top-earning dead celebrities list, but in the week before Christmas, Amazon.com ranks "Elvis' Christmas Album," which includes "White Christmas," 447th, and "White Christmas: Bing Crosby," 124th. And we all know which singer we are more likely to hear while standing in line for gift wrap. Why?

I think the explanation has to do with what is still immutable about Christmas. Rock culture, the convulsive world ushered in with Elvis, infantilized the way we live and love. This rendered the old love song sequally wise, wise-cracking and musically challenging into largely unintelligible artifacts of a lost civilization. But "White Christmas" is no love song, which may account for its durability, as well as Bing's perfectly mellow-gold rendition. The record speaks to an innocent yearning that still marks the public holiday season, a time-out in the year that isn't twisted by sexual hype; "ironic" expectations; or an anti-establishment pose. On the contrary, folksy home, rustic hearth, middle-class life itself become something to dream about. Which is just what the songwriter wrote. May your days be merry and bright, and may all your Christmases be white.

Diane West

Bringing the Voice of Christmas Back to Prime Time: New Television Milestones with Bing

Greg Van Beek gives us the background to those very welcome TV programmes last Christmas.

The one performer who has become as much of a symbol of the Christmas season as snow, mistletoe and Saint Nick himself has posthumously accomplished an amazing feat. Twenty-seven years since his passing, Bing Crosby appeared on not one, not two, but three new Christmas specials on three different major television networks. My good friend (and fellow ICC member), Crosby family film archivist Bob DeFlores and myself were privileged to play a part in the production of each program.

These three shows were in production at about the same time, so we were in the Christmas mode a bit early this year.

Nick & Jessica's Family Christmas

Let's begin with Bing's latest "virtual" duet. It all began on August 31, when I received the following e-mail from TV producer Paul Flattery:

Gary Tellalian gave me your e-mail, we are currently working out of the same production offices but on different projects. I'm doing the Nick & Jessica Christmas Special for ABC. When Gary got wind of one of our ideas he said to contact you as you had helped him on a similar project (Clay Aiken/TVLand).

Essentially we are looking into Jessica [Simpson] duetting the Christmas classic "White Christmas" with Bing Crosby. I have the film Holiday Inn where the duet is with Marjorie Reynolds (?) and visually it's perfect to replace her with Jessica — just a couple of angles with good separation between them. Audio wise it's a problem because they both sing....

Anyway I wanted to touch base because Gary said

Classic Duets, When I Fall In Love: The One and Only Nat King Cole, Andy Williams: My Favorite Duets, etc.) for me to pass on to Mrs. Crosby during her visit to Milwaukee in April 2003, which I did. John very much wanted to do a similar compilation of Bing's 1970's TV Christmas specials, and indicated so in his letter to Mrs. Crosby.

A few weeks after her visit here, I phoned Mrs. Crosby and asked if she had a chance to view the tapes and give some thought to John's proposal. She said she did, that she liked what she saw and would send the proposal on to her attorney to work out the details. Sadly, despite repeated follow-up phone calls by John Scheinfeld, and the intervention of Bob DeFlores and myself, nothing more became of the project. That is, until the Spring of 2004.

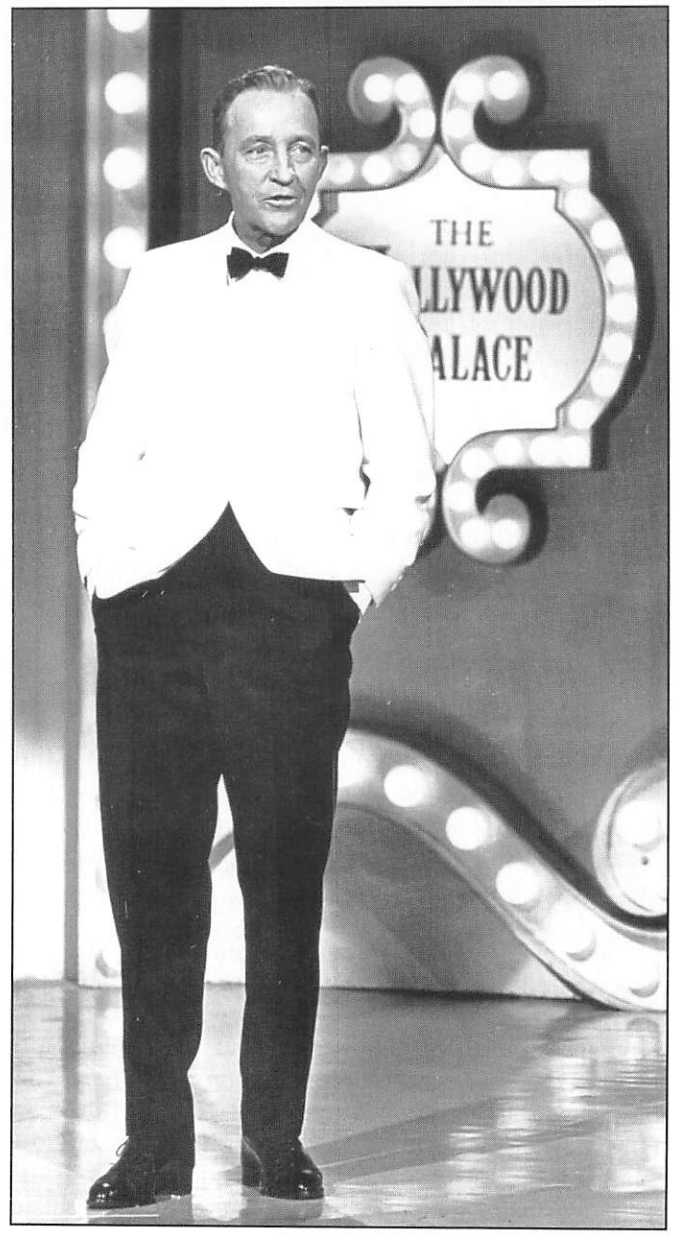
Not wanting to give up on what I thought was a terrific idea, I suggested a different approach to John. Knowing that he had been in discussions with Felisa Vanoff, widow of Hollywood Palace executive producer Nick Vanoff, regarding possible compilations of Palace performances, I mentioned that Bing hosted the Christmas episodes of the series for four consecutive years, and that the best moments from each of these shows would make for a wonderfully entertaining and nostalgic TV special. John was very responsive to the idea, and said he would discuss it with Felisa.

On August 28th, John sent me an e-mail with the good news that he was making some headway and asking whether I had tapes of the Hollywood Palace Christmas shows. I wrote back and told John that I did indeed have the four shows and would be glad to send copies to him. In the interim, John had written back asking if I had the 1969 Palace Christmas show hosted by Perry Como. I indicated that I did, but inquired as to why he would want it? John said that the owners of the Hollywood Palace series, and the representatives from American Public Television, who would be distributing this proposed special to PBS stations across the country, felt that from a marketing standpoint, it would be more advantageous to have both of these great performers, with their similar singing styles and associations with the music of Christmas, together on one show. Being a fan of both Crosby & Como, and knowing of their mutual admiration for one another, I agreed with their logic and sent John the Como show along with the four Crosby shows for his evaluation.

By September 1st, John had received my tapes, and wrote me to say that "Bill Harbach, spoke with Mrs. Crosby on Friday (Aug.27). She is, apparently, very excited about the idea and even gave him dates of her availability in October to tape an interview. Bill was going to call Harry and I'm going to call him about getting Mary as well. I am optimistic, therefore, that this will actually happen. I'm going to start screening the tapes tomorrow night and will have finished them by the end of the weekend."

Amazingly, just two days later on September 3rd, John had already scheduled interviews with Kathryn Crosby, Harry Crosby, and Bill Harbach, and was planning on approaching Mary Crosby next. He had also watched the tapes I sent him, and agreed he had plenty of material from which to make a great show. John made preliminary decisions on what performances would be used, and sent me a copy of the list he compiled for my thoughts and ideas. He would narrow it down to the customary 15-20 songs upon his return from Hawaii on September 18th. John was especially interested in the song "Beautiful Things", and asked me if I knew anything about this song, if it was something Bing sang before.

With John lining up people to interview for the show, I suggested my dear friend Nick Perito, as I knew he would be a tremendous asset, having been musical director for the last season (1969-70) of the Hollywood Palace following the tragic death of Mitchell Ayres. He also can be seen on camera, during the 1969 Christmas episode, accompanying Perry Como on piano as he sings "Love In A Home". John was thrilled to have this musical genius as part of his production. At my suggestion, Nick, in turn, put John in touch with his dear friend Ray Charles, of the 'Ray Charles Singers' fame, who worked so many years with Perry Como and are guests on the 1969 Palace Christmas show. Nick immediately agreed to tape an interview sometime in October.



All was progressing very smoothly, until September 28th, when I received an ominous e-mail from Nick Perito:

John Scheinfeld called today to tell me the Hollywood Palace thing might not happen. They've run into a few snags with the licensing.

Gulp! Not again. Not when we were this close. I immediately phoned John, who confirmed the bad news he had just received that morning. He said:

We've only got until Thursday afternoon (September 30) to close a deal or the show can't happen. Mostly because of deadlines and the time needed to make a great show. The Palace people assured me they could get the clearances and on that basis I talked to PBS. It turns out they didn't quite have the clearances down.

With only two days left to save the show, there was no time to spare. My next phone call was to Bob DeFlores. I explained the urgency of the situation, and he, in turn, immediately phoned Mrs. Crosby and Mark Brodka to find out what was happening and what could be done to rectify the monetary dispute. It turns out contractual terms were not yet reached regarding the DVD release of the special, which PBS wanted to offer as one of its pledge drive incentives, not the actual telecast for PBS.

It was touch and go for a couple of days. A real nail-biter! At John's urging, Mark Brodka got in touch with Herman Rush, who is one of the owners of the Hollywood Palace series, along with William Harbach, the Nick Vanoff Estate, and ABC/Disney. By late Wednesday night (September 29th), the tides had turned, and John Scheinfeld wrote to say that he had made significant progress on the Crosby front today. He had had a very nice conversation with Mark Brodka and then passed him along to the Palace people. John was able to persuade the PBS people to hold off one more day, and wrote me late on Thursday evening (September 30) to say things were looking good. I phoned John on Friday evening (October 1), and he gave me the great news that all the contracts were signed and the show was back on track! We both breathed a collective sigh of relief. All of us who enjoyed seeing *Christmas At The Hollywood Palace* on PBS this year owe our thanks and gratitude to Bob DeFlores. If it weren't for him, and for his interceding at my request, this show never would've gotten off the ground.

On Sunday evening (October 10th), another update message from John arrived:

...I am flying up to San Francisco Wednesday, October 13th to interview Kathryn at the Hillsborough home she shared with Bing. Back to LA where, on Thursday, I'm interviewing Mary Frances Crosby, Felisa Vanoff (Nick Vanoff's widow) and your buddy, Nick Perito at a hotel in Santa Monica. Then I'm on a red-eye to New York for Friday interviews with Harry Crosby and Bill Harbach.

From Harry's office I got numbers in Florida for Nathaniel. I will call him tomorrow to see if I can persuade him to fly up to NYC to be interviewed as well. And as with much of show business, after waiting a year, we now have so little time to put the show together. We need a rough cut by 10/26 and a final master by 11/4. The show will begin airing on PBS stations across the country on 11/29.

John felt it was appropriately ironic when I informed him that he'd be taping some of his interviews on Thursday October 14, the 27th anniversary of Bing's passing. His presence was definitely felt that day! As for Nathaniel, he was traveling on business when John was taping the interviews and wasn't available. That's the only reason for his absence on the show. He regretted not being able to be a part of it along with his mother, sister and brother. Following his marathon taping sessions, John took the time to fill me in on October 21st:

We're on a sprint to finish the Hollywood Palace show. My interviews with Kathryn, Mary, Harry and Nick Perito went extremely well. All were very nice, gracious and good storytellers. Kathryn was most gracious, serving us cake afterward, giving us a tour of the Hillsborough house and autographing copies of her books. Mary was extremely warm and articulate and Harry was such a nice, regular guy. Nick, of course, was funny, poignant and a fountain of useable sound bites. I also interviewed Ray Charles, Bill Harbach and Felisa Vanoff. All gave me great stuff. Now comes the hard part — weaving it all together into a coherent whole. And making the tough choices as to what has to be cut for time. As usual, I've got so much good interview and show material and there's simply not enough space within the 60 minutes for everything.

On October 25, Nick Perito wrote me to say he saw a rough edit of the show. "It has some great moments and the interviews were very candid," he said. He also mentioned he would be overdubbing some Christmas background music for the show on a keyboard synthesizer on Thursday (October 28th). John felt some of the interview segments needed some musical underscoring. All of this underscoring was strictly improvisational, with Nick managing to sneak in a few notes of "Where The Blue of the Night" during the scene where Kathryn Crosby appears gazing wistfully at a painting of Bing that is hung in their Hillsborough home.

John felt honored to have Nick providing the music for the show. "Who better to do it?" he said, being that Nick provided the music for so many of the Hollywood Palace shows, several of Bing's Christmas TV specials in the 1970's, and, of course, all of Perry Como's Christmas TV specials. And I know Nick was very happy to be working again on another Christmas show, especially one featuring his dear friends Perry & Bing.

John managed to pull it off, finishing the final edit of the show a few days prior to the PBS deadline of November 4th. There are a number of performances that didn't make the final cut. Initially, John wanted to use Bing's opening number from the 1965 show "The White World of Winter". When it became apparent that Bing was simply lip-synching to his recording of the song (and not very well at that!), it was not used. As a rule, John likes to use only live performances. The song, "Beautiful Things" from the 1967 show, actually made it into the rough cut, in Act 2, but inevitably was cut due to time constraints. There was also a toss up between two Perry Como numbers, "Love In A Home", and "Christmas Eve". The latter featured Perry and the Ray

Charles Singers lip-synching to their recording. "Love In A Home" was opted for instead, to offset Perry and the Ray Charles Singers, who joined him on nearly every song. "Love In A Home" featured just Perry accompanied by Nick Perito on piano. Nick convinced John to use it because lyrically, the song is what Christmas is all about; love and home and family.

Also, segments featuring Bob Newhart, The Lennon Sisters, and the puppet act of Kukla, Fran and Ollie were originally planned to be a part of the show. When it became apparent that there were so many wonderful music performances featuring Bing & Perry to choose from, John decided to concentrate on them instead. Unfortunately, the press releases for this show still touted their appearances, which must have caused some confusion to viewers anticipating their appearance.

The show aired at different dates and times all across the country between November 29th and December 25th, whenever the local PBS affiliates had scheduled their pledge drive week. It aired December 6th in New York on Channel 13, with Kathryn Crosby and Bill Harbach in the WNET studio for the pledge breaks. Unfortunately, Denise Richardson, who interviewed them, hadn't done her homework and didn't realize Perry Como was no longer with us! Bill Harbach had to give her the sad news that Perry "took a cab", borrowing a line from the famous New York Daily Mirror columnist Lee Mortimer. Martin McQuade gives further details of the WNET interview later in this issue.

Here in the Milwaukee area, there was an even greater injustice. The show was scheduled to air December 9th on WMVS Channel 10, as was listed on their website. When the regional TV Guide magazine was published for the week, it listed *This Old House* at that time instead! I called the station to find out what was happening, and they simply said they didn't get their pledge drive program schedule to the magazine in time, but the show would air as scheduled. I couldn't believe it. As John Scheinfeld said it was "very bush league not to get their PR people on the case." So I managed to get air- time on three different local radio stations on short notice to do what I could to frantically promote the show to Southeastern Wisconsin. So ends the roller-coaster ride saga of *Christmas At The Hollywood Palace*!

The Bravo Christmas Special

The third TV special premiered on the BRAVO network December 14 and was titled simply *The Christmas Special Christmas Special.* It was originally intended to be an hour - long retrospective of some of the best moments of Christmas variety TV shows of the past. What it wound up being was far different.

I first became aware of this show back on June 4th, when my friend (and TV variety show expert) Tom Wilson wrote to say "I'm working on a Christmas clip show for Trio and naturally suggested some Bing clips". At that date, Trio had already taped an interview with Mary Crosby and was looking for clips to accompany her. Tom said he thought they were covered with excerpts from the Hollywood Palace Christmas shows, when the Crosby children were still quite young, but they were looking for something extra special on Bing, if I had any thoughts.

I suggested a few things, including the Little Drummer Boy / Peace on Earth duet with Clay Aiken from last year's *Nick At Nite Holiday Special.* Trio/BRAVO seemed most interested in the duet, so I provided Tom with Gary Tellalian's contact information. It turned out that the Trio crew had worked with Gary before, which was helpful. In the interim, Bob DeFlores provided Trio with a screener copy of the performance. They wound up using part of the song, segueing from the original duet with David Bowie to the digital reincarnation with Clay Aiken.

I also suggested they use Bing's performance of "Do You Hear What I Hear?" from Bob Hope's 1965 Christmas special. It's in color, and features Bing lip-synching to his 1963 recording of the song. I thought it would be possible to simply mate the video up with Capitol Records' 24-bit digitally remastered 1999 CD release of the song (on the "Bing Crosby's Christmas Classics" album) to create a new Bing "music video". Well, they wound up using this video footage as well in a few brief snippets, but it was silent! There was narration over the video instead of Bing's crooning.

As for describing what the show was all about, I can do no better than to quote from Joanne Weintraub's review of the show from the December 11th edition of Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel newspaper:

...The message of "The XSXS," hammered home with unseemly glee, is that Christmas specials not only reflect but reinforce the worst of the holiday season: family togetherness masking raging dysfunction; comfort and joy muscled aside by rampant materialism; fake snow, fake trees and fake smiles.

Offered up as Exhibit A is the annual gala hosted in the '60s and '70s by Andy Williams, whose onetime wife, Claudine Longet, kept showing up and smiling prettily even after they were divorced. Only the former Mrs. Williams' arrest and eventual conviction for criminal negligence in the fatal 1976 shooting of boyfriend Spider Sabich kept her off the guest list.

Show-biz daughters Mary Frances Crosby and Lorna Luft testify that they and their siblings hated being dragged onto Bing's and Judy's Christmas sets, respectively, to sing and simper. At least Garland didn't have her exes on her 1963 special, says Luft saucily, adding: "That would've been the first reality show."

...A collection of duets suggests that Christmas makes even stranger bedfellows than politics does: Bing crooning along with David Bowie in 1977, Pee Wee Herman getting down in 1988 with Grace Jones, who's wearing a molded silver breastplate and what may or may not be a saucepan on her head.

What began as a unique and original idea, with the promise of being something very special, ended up being just an excuse to smear the names and reputations of some of our finest entertainers, including Bing Crosby. It was a disappointment to say the least, and I'm certain if Mary Crosby had known the producer's true intentions, she never would've consented to tape an interview for it.

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So the Christmas Season of 2004 will go down as being the most active Bing has seen since his passing. Never before has he appeared on three major Christmas

specials on three different major TV networks in the same month. While only one of them was truly worth his talents, there's no arguing the fact that Bing obtained some excellent exposure on the tube, covering a wide demographic of the population. I feel privileged to have played a role in producing each of them, alongside my friend Bob DeFlores. We both worked very hard making these shows happen. Let's hope 2005 will carry on this trend of renewed interest in Bing. Not just at Christmastime, but all year through.

Greg Van Beek

Editor: We certainly owe a huge debt to Greg and Bob DeFlores for their hard work in helping these TV specials come to fruition. The duet with Jessica Simpson will have reached many younger people and this can only be good news. The Bravo special sounds rather tasteless with Bing apparently being described as an "alleged child abuser". Judy Schmid and I have both protested to Bravo Viewer Relations about this but neither of us have received a reply. I hope the Crosby family sue them!

However the highlight of the season was the Hollywood Palace special and reaction from Crosby fans in the States was rapid. First came Jon Oye with a posting on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum.

I just finished watching "Christmas At the Hollywood Palace" on my local PBS station, and I have to say, it was all I had hoped for and more, in spite of the abrupt interruptions of the pledge drive. It genuinely evoked for me memories of watching Bing at Christmastime during my childhood, and stirred up some very real and unexpected Christmas spirit. In fact, during a closing montage in which Bing is shown singing "White Christmas" at different times over the years in which he hosted the Palace Christmas shows, I remembered my dad telling me for the first time just how big that song was when he was a young man in the 1940's.

Unlike "A Bing Crosby Christmas - Like The Ones We Used To Know" - the program of clips hosted by Gene Kelly and Kathryn Crosby in 1979 - this offering didn't have the advantage of accessing Bing's later Christmas specials, as it was limited to the Hollywood Palace only. But this apparent disadvantage actually turned out to be a plus, in that we got to see complete performances of most of the songs that were featured, rather than a series of interrupted clips. The pace was more relaxed, similar to that of the old Hollywood Palace itself, which added to the nostalgia.

Also welcome were warm, in fact glowing, recollections and appropriately adulatory remarks from Kathryn, Harry, Mary Frances, Nick Perito, and others, the likes of which I haven't heard since "Remembering Bing", more than 20 years ago. Harry and Mary both reflected on what a great father Bing was, as well as their fond remembrances of performing with him and their mother. At one point Mrs. Crosby, while remembering a vocal slip-up of Nathaniel's on the Palace, recalled Bing's visible urge to jump in and sing the line properly, but instead - and her voice started to break with emotion at this point - he overcame his professional impulse and said "you did that part good." Darned if I didn't get a little choked up myself. We sometimes forget that this icon was a living, breathing man, don't we?

The theme, as the title states, was Christmas at the Hollywood Palace, and Perry Como hosted the final Christmas show in 1969, so a handful of his performances are included as well. I have mixed feelings about this, since I like Perry a lot, but I'd rather see a whole show of Bing. Nevertheless, it's always a pleasure to hear Como sing, and his style is certainly consistent with Bing's. In fact, early in the program, I believe it's Nick Perito and producer Bill Harbach who speak of how much Perry idolized Bing, and modeled himself after him. However, since he hosted only one Christmas show, there was obviously less Perry to select from; so his fans get to see most of - or all of - his performances from that particular night.

Much as I like Perry, the juxtaposition of his performances alongside Bing's serve to remind us of just how simultaneously warm, comfortable and professional Bing was in front of an audience. Certainly no one could ever accuse Perry of being stiff, but next to Bing that's exactly how he appears. More than once I just sat and marveled at Bing's stage presence, and how well he could do it all - and make it look so effortless. That's a cliché, I know, but after all, clichés come about because something is so obvious that it's worth repeating over and over. At a time in his life when he was "semi-retired", and supposedly "phoning it in", he could still overwhelm.

Thanks to the members of "Team Crosby" who pulled this one off. It's a keeper.

Jon Oye

Steven Lewis had the final word after contributions from other Bing fans:

I agree with Lee that the Palace special was too brief, although I didn't mind at all the intrusion of the second Mr. C. If Mr. Como was Mr. Cool, Der Bingle was the Grandaddy of Cool. Of course, by the late 1960s standards of "hip" were changing from easygoing to intense. Mr. Como and Mr. Crosby remained popular icons to the old crowd, but their prime had passed, contrary to the exhortations of the PBS announcer.

Many of these Palace snippets were new to me. I grew up in a desolate oasis where television consisted mostly of NBC, a snowy CBS and only rare glimpses of ABC out of Wichita. The only original Hollywood Palace show I viewed as a kid was the 1966 Christmas special hosted by Bing. I watched at a friend's house. They had one of those tall directional antennas. Not only did I get to view it on a color TV, but I also recorded Bing singing on a reel-to-reel tape machine. I wonder whatever happened to that tape?

The Crosby kids were cute and quite the hams. The family interacted quite well. From the testimony of Mary and Harry there were no beatings, no threats ... they enjoyed the spotlight and the chance to work with their dad. Nathaniel may have been a little camera shy at first, but it was clear to see he soon overcame that.

The Palace special closed with Bing singing

"White Christmas" from 4 different Palace shows. Then with a hop and a skip — and a slip of a disc — he was gone.

Steven Lewis

This was indeed a great show and we hope to be able to let UK members see it at the Leeds meeting in October.

LOOKING BACK: BING BEFORE BRUNSWICK

This article originally appeared in the April 1981 issue of BINGANG. It has been revised and reedited for inclusion in this issue of BING.

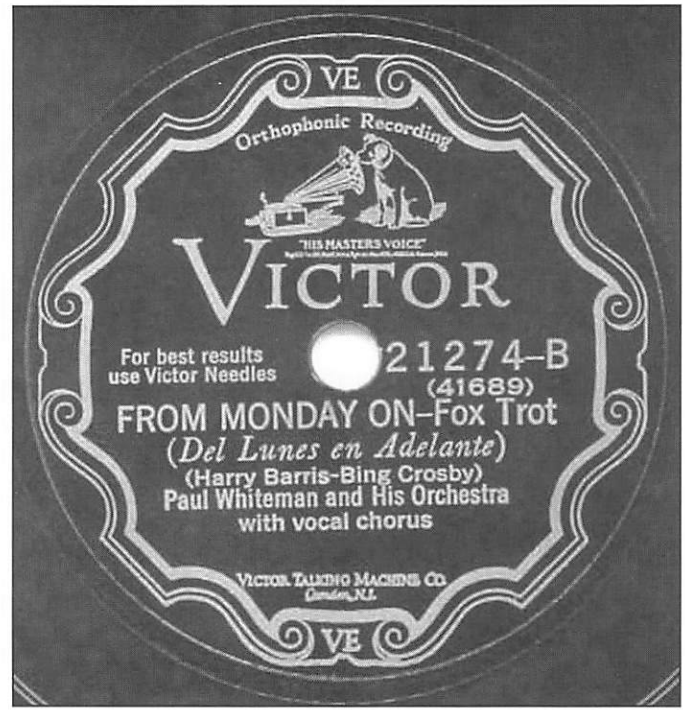
In October of 1926 two young men walked into a rather primitive recording studio in Los Angeles to cut a couple of sides with Don Clark's Los Angeles Biltmore Hotel Orchestra. One of the songs chosen was "I've Got the Girl," and the two men were Bing Crosby and Al Rinker.

Bob Ault's article in the Spring 2004 of BING about this recording gave us a few things to think about. The article was well-received, and we especially thank Stan White for his comments in the Summer 2004 issue (and for the tape he made for us). Stan basically agreed with Bob's analysis, but he asked "Why?" That's a very good question. We may never know the answer.

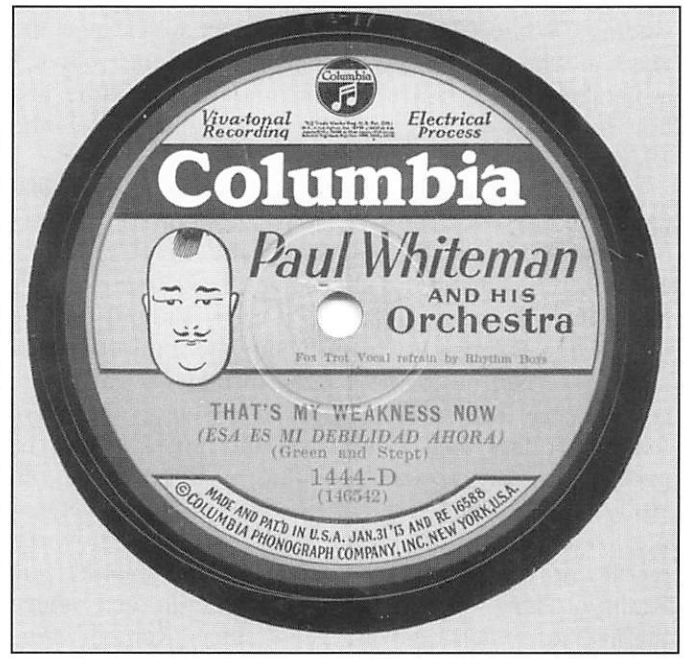
There seems to have been some kind of "method in their madness" in making this recording. The music was originally written in the key of F. The orchestra played it in the key of E-flat, possibly because it was an easier key to work with, as Bob suggested. The recording engineer slowed down his turntable to the point (70.5 rpm) where the finished record, played at the normal speed of 80 rpm, would put the recording back in the key of F. Stan's suggestion that the engineer slowed down the turntable in order to get the entire song on the record may have also been a factor. If the orchestra had played the piece more slowly, the "greyhound race" tempo would have been avoided, even though the "chipmunk" quality of Bing's and Al's voices probably would have still been there. If there had been no vocal, probably no one would have noticed the difference - except for the tempo.

The story of Bing's early career and his association with Paul Whiteman and his orchestra are too well known to International Club Crosby members to require repetition here. Bing's recordings with Whiteman were made between 1926 and 1930. The first one, "Wistful and Blue" with Al Rinker, was recorded on December 22, 1926; and the last one, the unissued "Everything's Agreed Upon" with the Rhythm Boys, was cut on May 23, 1930.

From 1920 until April of 1928 the Whiteman organization made records exclusively for the Victor Talking Machine Company, later known as RCA Victor. The records were released on Victor's black popular label, the electrical recordings (this includes all the Crosby discs) appearing on the Orthophonic "scroll" label.



Then in 1928 the Columbia Phonograph Company lured Whiteman away from Victor and into its own recording studios. Part of the deal involved a special Whiteman label using Whiteman's favorite caricature of himself. Brian Rust in his volume *The American Record Label Book* refers to the design as a "vulgar affair in five colours." It isn't *that* bad, but it is not one of Columbia's most attractive efforts, and it is usually referred to as the "potatohead" label. After about two years with Columbia, the Whiteman organization returned to the quiet elegance of Victor's scrolls, but by that time Bing had left the orchestra.



How do the Whiteman records hold up after all these years? The "King of Jazz" was a very popular and successful musician and recording artist during his time, but his work has not been much admired in certain quarters for many years. One reads in the jazz histories that his offerings were "pretentious," his arrangements

"top-heavy," his style "lumbering," his scores "pompous," and his organization "elephantine." On the other hand, no less an authority than Duke Ellington acknowledged that Whiteman did a lot for jazz. David Ewen, in his book *Men of Popular Music*, writes that Paul Whiteman was "one of the first of our important popular musicians to bridge the gap between serious and popular music" and that "when that fusion was completed, our popular music was well on its way toward artistic significance."

Be all that as it may, there is no question that many of Bing's recordings with Whiteman are of very great interest, not only from an historical but from an artistic point of view, regardless of any limitations that may exist in the accompaniments. As much admired as Crosby's vocals on these recordings are the contributions of such splendid instrumentalists as Bix Beiderbecke, Joe Venuti, Eddie Lang, the Dorsey Brothers, and Frank Trumbauer. Their work has helped keep these recordings alive and of interest to collectors.

During his Whiteman years Bing occasionally participated in recording sessions with other musicians, most of them connected with the Whiteman orchestra. These include a session for Okeh, a Columbia subsidiary, in January of 1928 with Frankie Trumbauer and his orchestra at which one of the "Mississippi Mud" recordings was cut; a Columbia session in December 1928 with Sam Lanin and the Ipana Troubadours which produced "I'll Get By" and "Rose of Mandalay"; an Okeh session in January 1929 with Sam Lanin and his Famous Players which resulted in three recordings, "I'm Crazy Over You," "Susianna," and "If I Had You"; another session in January 1929 with the Dorsey Brothers Orchestra which produced "The Spell of the Blues," "Let's Do It," and "My Kinda Love'; and several sessions for Columbia with small groups of instrumentalists from the Whiteman orchestra which resulted in "My Kinda Love," "Till We Meet," "I Kiss Your Hand Madame," "Baby, Oh Where Can You Be," "Can't We Be Friends," and "Gay Love." In addition the Rhythm Boys made several recordings without the orchestra, accompanied only by Harry Barris' piano.

After they left Paul Whiteman, Bing, Al, and Harry made one recording, "Three Little Words," for Victor with Duke Ellington's Orchestra and then teamed up with Gus Arnheim and his Cocoanut Grove Orchestra, who also recorded for Victor. By this time, however, it was clear who was emerging as a star performer, and the trio made just one more side together, "Them There Eyes." The other ten records with Arnheim were solos by Bing with one exception: "Ho Hum!" was done as a duet with Loyce Whiteman.

On March 30, 1931 Bing made his first two sides for Brunswick with a studio orchestra, returning to Arnheim and Victor for just one more session on May 1 of that year. After that he recorded exclusively for Brunswick until Decca was established in 1934.

One more pair of recordings needs to be mentioned here, even though they are out of place in the time period covered by this article. On September 2, 1931, while he was under contract to Brunswick, Bing made his first solo broadcast over the CBS radio network. For some reason, the Victor Company recorded two songs, "Just One More Chance" and "I'm Through With Love" off the air, and many years later they were issued on LP by RCA Victor.

Concerning 78 rpm reissues from the Whiteman-Arnheim era, it will be noted that the situation is not as complicated as it is for the Brunswick-ARC originals. Perhaps the decline of Whiteman's popularity during the depression years accounts for this. Only one of Bing's recordings, "Gay Love," was repressed on a string of Columbia reissue labels including Harmony, Diva, Velvetone, and Clarion. Other than that, Columbia showed little interest in these masters until the LP era. In 1936 Victor issued a 78 rpm album (P-4) entitled "A Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Album," which contained five sides with Bing (mostly previously unissued alternate takes). Then in 1941 Victor issued a second album, "A Souvenir Program by Paul Whiteman Orchestra," which included previously unissued material. Three of the Arnheim sides were repressed on Bluebird, a Victor subsidiary, and there were a number of singles from the era reissued on Victor.

There were, of course, many LPs issued by Columbia, Victor, and other companies which featured these early records, and the Whiteman-Arnheim era is well represented on many CDs. You need to look no further than the Jonzo series to find all of them, with all their known alternate takes.

Wayne L. Martin

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of $3 or £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries Please send all advertisements to the Editor

Anderson Publishing, 102 Boyce Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario, K2H 6J2, Canada. [Phone (613) 721-0811, e-mail: Rosemary@anderpub.com].

Gord Atkinson's *The Crosby Years* series remains available. US and Canadian members can obtain the CDs for $24.00 US for 2 CDs and $13.00 for one CD which includes postage. Canadian purchasers should pay CAN $30.00 for 2 CDs and CAN $16.00 for one

CD. Payment can be made by check, Visa or MasterCard. Please note that USA members may send US dollar checks to Anderson Publishing.

UK, Irish and European members who wish to obtain the CDs should contact Malcolm Macfarlane. The CDs cost £15.99 for two, £8.99 for one.

Dave Bennett, 1 Blackbird Close, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG22 5QL, UK (Tel: 01256 462218, Fax: 01256 328743, e-mail: blackbird@waitrose.com)

Dave has a separate advert for the CDs he has produced of the first ten of Bing's Philco shows. Your Editor has heard these and they really are of excellent quality. Dave has been involved in many Bing projects over the years and members can be assured of a great service.

Bert Bishop, Tideway, 100 Imperial Avenue, Maylandsea, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 6AJ, UK (Tel: 01621 742144)

Bert has a spare copy of the USA release of the film RIDING HIGH [Region 1] and offers it for £12.50 including postage in the UK.

Arthur Blood, 597 Osmaston Rd., Derby DE24 8NE, UK

Arthur has prepared a magnificent coloured collage of scenes from the film *White Christmas* which he is offering to UK members for £4 each. He will donate £1 for every one sold to ICC funds. The collage is A4 size and we have reproduced it as part of Bert Bishop's *Bing on the Box* section in order to display it properly.

Festival Films, 6115 Chestnut Terrace, Shorewood, MN 55331, USA (Tel. & Fax: (952) 470-2172, e-mail: Fesfilms@aol.com)

Ron Hall at Festival Films can meet all your requirements for Bing on DVD and video. See also www.FesFilms.com

Footlight Records, 113 East 12th St., New York, NY 10003, USA (Tel: (212) 533-1572, Fax: (212) 673-1496, e-mail: footlight1@aol.com)

For your Bing needs on CD and Vinyl. See also www.footlight.com

The Record Centre, 45-46 Loveday St., Birmingham B4 6NR, UK

(Tel: 0121-359-7399, e-mail: Raypurslow@blueyonder.co.uk)

Ray Purslow and his team are real supporters of the Crosby cause and for your Bing CDs (and LPs) contact Ray.

Select Circles, P. O. Box 302, Riverside, CT 06878, USA (Phone: 203-661-8421)

Select Circles have a large stock of Bing CDs. Write or call for information.

Don Stark, 8 St. Peter's Close, Eastcote, Ruislip, Middlesex HA4 9JT, UK (phone: 0208 866 8390)

Don is seeking a copy of the Phil Crosby 45 "Thanks", and also 1958 and 1959 copies of *Disc*, *Record Mirror* and *New Musical Express*.

Barry Whittingham, El Rancho Grande, 25c Garton Close, Cinderhill, Nottingham NG8 8RZ, UK (phone: 0115 913 4240, e-mail: barry.whittingham@ntlworld.com)

Barry is offering lapel green enamelled alloy badges. See image. Actual size is 1 1/4 inches (26 mm) tall by 7/8 inch (22 mm) wide. Cost (inc. p & p) £5 in the UK, £5.50 for Europe & Ireland and £6 for the rest of the world.

BING BINDERS

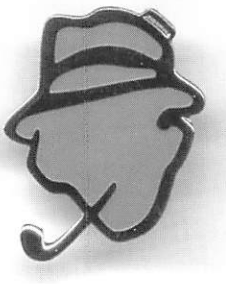
Keep your magazines in mint condition by storing them in these specially made binders. They have blue covers with BING in gold on the spine and hold 10 copies, which allow them to either be inserted or removed, yet also open flat for easy reading. Costing £6.99 inc postage, £7.99 to Europe, £8.99 elsewhere, they are available from Ken Mason, 12 Wycomb Grove, Melton Mowbray, Leics. LE13 1EQ

Bill Woodcock, 122 Station View, Starbeck, Harrogate HG2 7JB, UK (Phone: 01423 886061)

WANTED

BING magazines nos. 1 to 28

The ICC Mini Discography



Crosby Clubs Around The World

The ICC is pleased to be associated with the following Crosby organisations.

Bing's Friends And Collectors Society,
Hobie and Cathie Wilson, 236 Andrieux St., Sonoma, California 95476-6909, USA (tel. [707] 996-0257 -
e-mail: bingsfriends81@sbcglobal.net
website:
www.geocities.com/one_sonoma_rose/bingsfriends81.htm)

The Victorian Bing Crosby Society
Bob Neate, 22 Pakenham St., Blackburn, Victoria, Australia 3130. (tel. [03] 9877 1983)

Internet sites:

Bing Crosby Internet Museum:
www.kcmetro.edu/~crosby/

This is a wonderful site which carries up-to-date news and has a lively discussion board. Not to be missed by those on the net.

The Immortal Talents of Bing Crosby
http://www.geocities.com/BourbonStreet/3754/bing.html

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OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

In Tune International, 10 Collingwood Drive, Mundesley, Norfolk NR11 8JB, UK (phone/fax: 01263 722818,
e-mail: gerry.stonestreet@virgin.net,
website: www.GnuDawn.co.uk/intune)

Described as the magazine for lovers of the golden age of popular music, this excellent periodical contains 40 pages about nostalgic and easy listening music. Subscriptions, which cover six issues, are £17.40 for the UK, £19.80 for Europe and £26.40 for the rest of the world. Payment can be made by credit card. Highly recommended.

Memory Lane, P. O. Box 1939, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 3UH, England.(www.memorylane.org.uk
e-mail: mail@memorylane.org.uk)

Memory Lane is a lively magazine specialising in music of the 1920s through to the 1950s. Although the emphasis is placed on British dance bands and vocalists of the 1930s and 1940s, *Memory Lane* also covers the American scene, jazz, big bands, personalities, music hall and variety artistes. Regular features on Al Bowlly - one of Britain's favourite vocalists. Published quarterly and attractively printed and presented, each edition includes exclusive articles by a team of world-class writers and journalists plus Picture Pages, CD and Cassette reviews, Readers letters, discographical features and the advertisements that you will want to read. A *"must"* for 78 RPM collectors. 3 First Class stamps (or 3 IRCs) will bring a sample copy and full details.

Vintage Record Mart, 'Sarsden', Lower Common, Aylburton, Nr. Lydney, Gloucestershire GL15 6DR, UK

This is a 32 page quarterly trading magazine for collectors of 78s. Annual subscriptions are UK £8, Europe £10.40, USA & Canada £12.20, Australia and New Zealand £12.80.

International Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 15 Kilpin Hill Lane, Staincliffe, West Yorkshire, WF13 4BG, UK (phone: 01924 401909, e-mail: markfoxtbas@hotmail.com).

Pat Boone Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 63, Sunderland, SR1 1PN, UK

Eddie Cantor Appreciation Society, c/o Michelle Malik, 14611 Valley Vista Blvd., Sherman Oaks, CA 91403, USA (email: cantorfan@aol.com
website: http://www.eddiecantor.com/)

Rosemary Clooney, http://www.rosemaryclooney.com/

The Doris Day Society, 31 Kirkfield Rise, Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 9DX, UK

The Deanna Durbin Society, c/o Denis Holland, 84A Wolverhampton Rd., Stafford ST17 4AW, UK (phone: 01785 213987).

Dick Haymes Society, c/o Roger L. Dooner, 2951 Tyler St., NE Minneapolis, MN 55418, USA, or Maurice Dunn, 16 Cradley Park Road, Netherton, Dudley West Midlands, DY2 9SR, UK

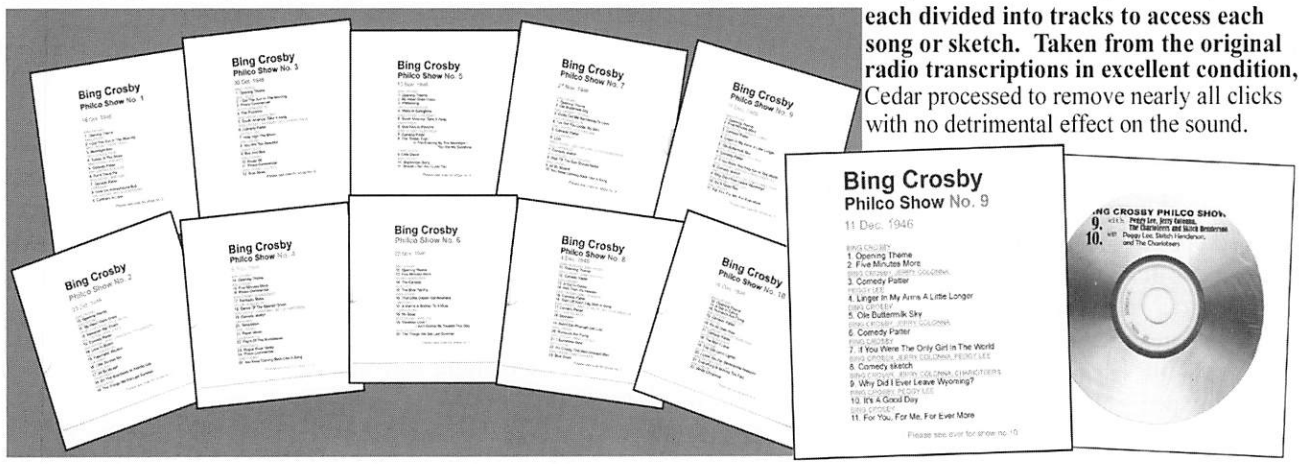
International Al Jolson Society, c/o John Wehrman, 1195 Hickory Hill Drive, Green Bay, WI 54304, USA (e-mail: JWWehrman@aol.com - web site: http://www.jolson.org/)

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY, UK (phone / fax 01723 863022 - email: tony@flias.com , website: www.btinternet.com/~flias/)

The Dean Martin Association, P. O. Box 80, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 1ZR, UK

Nelson Riddle Appreciation Society - Alan Wright, 4 Jardine Cottages, Templewood Lane, Stoke Poges, Bucks SL2 4BQ, UK (Phone / Fax 01753 663869, website: www.btinternet.com/~mike.leach
e-mail: mike.leach@btinternet.com)

The first ten BING CROSBY PHILCO SHOWS (Oct. '46 - Dec. '46) on a set of 5 CDs, 2 shows per CD each divided into tracks to access each song or sketch. Taken from the original radio transcriptions in excellent condition, Cedar processed to remove nearly all clicks with no detrimental effect on the sound.


Bing Crosby
Philco Show No. 9
11 Dec. 1946
1. Opening Theme
2. Five Minutes More
3. Comedy Patter
4. Linger In My Arms A Little Longer
5. Ole Buttermilk Sky
6. Comedy Patter
7. If You Were The Only Girl In The World
8. Comedy sketch
9. Why Did I Ever Leave Wyoming?
10. It's A Good Day
11. For You, For Me, For Ever More

Usually featuring Bing singing 3 or 4 solo songs plus duets or sketches with his guests who include Judy Garland, Peggy Lee, Bob Hope, Jimmy Durante and Jerry Colonna. Commercials are kept intact, so that each show is exactly as was broadcast.

Presented with a full track listing for each show in card wallets and inner sleeves with details of the show numbers and guests printed on the body of each CD.

If there is an adequate demand it is anticipated that all Philco, Chesterfield and General Electric Shows (1946 –1952) will eventually be issued chronologically at 3 monthly intervals of 10 shows at a time; that would then be a total of about 300 shows should we complete the entire series. The process could be sped up if you insist!

Cost per set of 10 shows (5 CDs) is £30 including post worldwide. International money orders or cash sent securely to nearest equivalent amount is acceptable, and an assurance that any cause for disappointment will be happily rectified. Orders also possible via PAYPAL on receipt of your e-mail address.

David Bennett : 1 Blackbird Close, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG22 5QL, UK
blackbird@waitrose.com

Sinatra Music Society - Mrs Margaret Cummings, National Secretary, 36 Hillcrest Rd., Wylde Green, Sutton Coldfield B72 1EN, UK (tel: 0121-350-0683,
website: www.sinatra-ms.com/Sinatra.html)
Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 01 8212418)
Kate Smith Commemorative Society, P. O. Box 3575, Cranston, RI 02910, USA (e-mail: pinky@wzrd.com - website: http://katesmith.org/)
Andy Williams Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 5, Westerham, Kent TN16 1UE, UK

Books 'n' Bing

1. "I Just Happened To Be There...": *Making Music With The Stars*

by Nick Perito - published by Xlibris Corporation. ISBN 1-4134-5372-4. 336 pp. $22.99 (paperback).

One of the highlights of the Hofstra conference was a series of magnificent impromptu piano solos by Nick Perito whilst he was accompanying Kathryn Crosby on the final evening. At the conference, Nick mentioned that he was writing a book and your Editor has been eagerly awaiting this. Initial reaction was not good as there were very critical comments on Amazon.com by a UK reader which suggested that the book was "too sugary and sweet." This was balanced by a favourable review by our own Greg Van Beek so it was with genuine curiosity that I started to read my copy when it arrived.

Nick comes from an Italian family and was raised in Denver, Colorado. He describes his early life in some detail as well as his Army service and his musical training at Juilliard. By the early 1950s, he was into show business as an accordion player and pianist and an early meeting with Bing comes about when Nick is working with the Ray Bloch orchestra on the Ed Sullivan Show in 1956.

> In preparation for an appearance by Bing Crosby singing "True Love," he [Ray Bloch] decided that a small cabaret orchestra would play up on the stage, but off camera, while accompanying Bing. We had our music taped to the floor so that just in case the camera did pan over and see us playing, it would all appear to be very casual. During the rehearsals, we found it extremely difficult to watch Ray, who was conducting us and at the same time, read our music that was taped on the floor. He would not listen to our problem. The plan was that Bing and Ed would have a little chat out in front of the curtain and on a certain cue, we would start the musical intro of the song. Then the curtain would rise and Bing would sing. Good idea?—Not really.
>
> When we got on the air, we started the intro as we had rehearsed, but when the curtain was supposed to rise, it got stuck! And that was just as I started the solo cadenza. Ray Bloch was in a dither. All of us backstage could hear Ed and Bing adlibbing and trying to make light of this unexpected hang up. All the while, I just kept on playing and improvising while chaos was going on all around me. Finally the curtain did rise, and just before Bing started to sing, he paused for a moment, turned to me and said, "Thank you, Mr. Paganini of the accordion." Ray Bloch was much more cordial to me in our subsequent meetings. Little did I realize at the time that years later, Bing and I would meet again and work together many more times.

In 1963, Nick became an arranger for Mitchell Ayres and began writing arrangements for the Perry Como Show. This changed his life and he took over the conducting duties for the show the following year and stayed with Perry until his death as well as working with practically every show-biz great. He was the musical director for the final Hollywood Palace shows and for several of Bing's 1970s TV shows including the Pasadena concert in 1977, which he describes in some detail.

The book creates an impression of an exceptionally busy man and Nick covers his entertainment career with many pen pictures of the personalities he came across over the years, including Bing. He does not shirk criticism as implied by the UK reader's review and several stars come in for severe put-downs. The book does not have an index, which is usually an irritation to people like me who look up Bing references, but in this case a very detailed contents section almost makes up for this. My only real criticism is of the photographs which are very poorly reproduced. I was a little disappointed too that we did not learn more about Perry Como's final concert in 1994 (which I attended) as clearly there was a lot of drama behind the scenes with Perry refusing to continue at one time.

Final verdict? An interesting book packed with show-business references, written by a man whose hard work and talent brought him into contact with many of the legendary stars. And here are Nick's final words on Bing.

> I choose to remember Bing as the giant entertainer that we all loved. He was the man who blazed the trail for many of the talented crooners who followed in his footsteps. In later years, Perry Como insisted on doing a fifteen-minute medley honoring Bing at the end of every one of his live concert shows. He said that if it wasn't for Bing, he would still be back in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, cutting hair and Frank (Sinatra) would own a pizzeria in Hoboken, New Jersey.

Next, here's Keith Parkinson with a look at two more new books.

2. Memories are Made of This: Dean Martin through his daughter's eyes.

by Deana Martin with Wendy Holden - published by Sidgwick and Jackson. ISBN 0-283-073-462. 298pp. £18.99 (or £11.39 plus postage, from Amazon)

You may think that if you've read "Dino" by Nick Tosches you have no need for another volume about Dean Martin. And you could be right. Tosches examined the Martin career from a darker perspective than is the case with daughter Deana. Not that "Memories are Made of This" attempts to whitewash the actor/singer. In fact, daughter Deana is up front from the off. In the book's prologue, when asked by fans if Dean was a good father,

she writes:

To their surprise I shake my head and smile. "No", I reply candidly. "He wasn't a good father, but he was a good man."

Deana Martin was born in 1948. Dean divorced Deana's mother whilst Deana was still a child and she came to regard Jeanne, Martin's second wife, as her mother. The book covers Dean's showbusiness career as a background to Deana's life as his daughter. In fact, this is a book where the subject takes second place to the author. You finish the book knowing as much, if not more, about Deana than Dean. The references to Bing are cursory and reveal nothing new about the Crosby-Martin career interactions. There are a couple of good reasons to buy the book in addition to the domestic issues covered by Deana. The first is the detail regarding the break-up of the Dean Martin/Jerry Lewis partnership. Lewis contributes a foreword to the biography and it becomes clear that Deana Martin regards Dean's ex-partner with affection. The second reason is the book's final chapters detailing Dean's last years. He was a sick man and you gain an insight as to why he was no longer capable of remaining in showbusiness.

Keith Parkinson

3. Sinatra

by Richard Havers - published by Dorling Kindersley. ISBN 1-405-300-892. 360pp. £25 (or £17.50 plus postage, from Amazon)

Yet another coffee table book about Frank. This one comes recommended. It is the best of its kind so far. Richard Havers conducted dozens of interviews and made no attempt to take sides with Sinatra's fans or his detractors. He covers facts and concentrates on Sinatra the entertainer rather than on the personal issues that have sold several Sinatra books in the past. Insights into Sinatra's career were provided by musical associates such as Ray Anthony, Bill Miller, Phil Ramone and Jimmy Webb. Assistance was provided by those who may not have known the man but certainly had a sound knowledge of his career as an entertainer. Ed O'Brian, Ray Purslow and Spencer Leigh fall into that category. The Sinatra Music Society was also consulted.

A book of this kind cannot overlook Sinatra's showbusiness colleagues. As you would expect, Dean Martin is heavily featured. Bing also rates a lot of mentions. The book's index covers general references to Bing as well as specific ones relating to record sales, films and the Crosby influence on the Sinatra singing style. Sometimes new information is made available. The two pages devoted to *High Society* reveal that the soundtrack album has sold over three million copies worldwide. There is a page about Bing which reveals that when he died he was worth in excess of $150 million. If I once knew that, I have since forgotten it. The Sinatra story unfolds chronologically but there are many sidebars which fill in certain areas in some depth. His work with Gordon Jenkins, for instance, or his relationship with Mitch Miller. The book is printed on quality paper and is lavishly illustrated. Most of the pictures are in colour. The fact that the book does not suffer (or benefit) from the editorial involvement of the Sinatra family makes it an objective overview of Sinatra the entertainer. All in all, "Sinatra" is a quality publication. If it sells as well as it deserves to do perhaps Dorling Kindersley can be persuaded to follow it up with a volume on the top entertainer of the twentieth century.

Keith Parkinson

4. Weather Bird: Jazz at the Dawn of Its Second Century

by Gary Giddins, published by Oxford, ISBN: 0-195-156-072. 688 pp., $35 (or $21 through Barnes & Noble).

Your editor has not seen this new book by Gary but several good reviews have been noticed. One by Richard Scheinin of Mercury News includes the following:

"*Weather Bird* gathers many of Giddins' writings from 1990 to 2003, when he ended a 30-year stint at the Village Voice. His Voice column, from which much of the anthology is drawn, was titled "Weather Bird" in homage to Armstrong's seminal side of that name, a 1928 duet with pianist Earl Hines. On that track, valiant young Armstrong gauged all the music's possibilities — everything blowing in the wind — then flew off in bold new directions. And as a boy in the early '60s, Giddins says in his introduction, he "found in Louis Armstrong specifically and in jazz in general a substitute for the God of my fathers." Clicking with Armstrong, Giddins clicked with the music in the broadest sense. In fact, his book is an antidote to jazz parochialism: A 15-page virtuoso history of the jazz avant-garde is followed by a portrait of Bing Crosby (about whom Giddins wrote a biography, published in 2001)."

Looks to be a great book for those with an interest in jazz and nice to read that Bing is included.

BING-ING AROUND

Pete Cakanic's spot.

The Academy Awards for 2004 were held in February. I was going through my collection and came across the March 15, 1945 radio broadcast of the 1944 Oscar show at Grauman's Chinese Theatre. Bing that year won an Oscar for his role in *Going My Way* and the film itself picked up seven Oscars in all from ten nominations. This included an Oscar for Best Song for "Swinging on a Star"

Bob Hope was the MC and announced that "In this 17th year of the Awards, film clips of the singers and songs that were nominated will be shown for the first time." Bob also announced the winner for this section and was clearly delighted with the result. Neither Johnny Burke nor Jimmy Van Heusen were present to pick up the Oscar and Bob asked "Is Barney Dean in the house?" before the award was taken away by a friend.

See how many of the songs you remember. I don't recall hearing the original broadcast but do recognize most of the songs. Later brief scenes of the actor/actress nominees were shown.

In order of presentation the songs and singers were:

"I Couldn't Sleep a Wink Last Night" - Frank

Sinatra
"Sweet Dreams, Sweetheart" - Joan Leslie
"Now I Know" - Dinah Shore
"The Trolley Song" - Judy Garland
"I'm Making Believe" - Lynn Bari
"I'll Walk Alone" - Dinah Shore
"Rio de Janeiro." - Tito Guizar
"Long Ago and Far Away" - Rita Hayworth
"Remember Me to Carolina" - Bernie Fields
"Silver Shadows and Golden Dreams" [an unnamed vocalist sings whilst Belita ice-skates in the film *Lady Let's Dance*]
"Swinging on a Star" - Bing Crosby
"Too Much in Love" - Jackie Moran

Bing's enormous popularity at that time was amply demonstrated because when his name was mentioned, spontaneous applause broke out. There was no applause for any of the others.

Pete Cakanic

Celluloid Crosby

In terms of box-office success *White Christmas* (1954) was regarded as Bing's most profitable film. At least, the list published in 'The Economist' some years ago regarded it as such. That magazine had adjusted box-office grosses to take account of inflation and *White Christmas* ranked as Crosby's greatest earner world-wide. Disregarding inflationary adjustments and based on Variety's list of box-office champs, it came eleventh in the ranking of hits for the period 1951 to 1960. Its rentals in North America totalled $12 million. The only other Crosby film featuring in the top hundred for that decade was *High Society* (1956) which took $5.8 million. If those figures were adjusted for inflation the gap between ticket sales of the two films would be even greater. To look at inflation in terms of cinema ticket prices on a personal basis is like visiting a previous life.

When I saw *White Christmas* in December, 1955, it was at a village cinema in Burscough Bridge and I paid 9d for my seat in the stalls. If we regard that as the decimalisation equivalent of 4p then a current seat price of £4 at my local multiplex indicates an inflation rate of 1,000%. It may be even more because I'm not very good with decimal points. And that £4 ticket is for a senior citizen attending a matinee. Strictly speaking I don't think I'm entitled to that concession just yet. However, the average age of multiplex staff is 18yrs and 3 months and it is well known that cashiers of that age regard anyone over the age of forty as possessing a pension book.

What follows is a re-appraisal of the popularity of films in Great Britain. The most recent information made available in terms of the commercial success of a film comes via the British Film Institute (the BFI) who had this to say about their listing.

The aim of The Ultimate Film project was to discover and rank the most successful feature films of the sound era based on their performance at British cinemas. Documentaries, short films, and silent films were excluded. The chart rankings reflect estimated numbers of admissions to cinemas rather than the amount of money taken at the box office. This method was felt to be a more consistent indicator of popularity across the large time span covered than box office takings. Compiling the list has been by no means an easy task. Prior to the 1970s, neither admissions nor box office takings were systematically recorded or published in Britain so we have had to weigh up a range of other evidence to estimate the performance of earlier films. We have delved into the collections of the bfi National Library to look at annual ranking lists in the industry trade papers of the time, press reports, publicity information and other existing research.

Further factors considered when estimating a film's performance include the type(s) of release, industry practices and audience behaviour at the time and the total cinema admissions for the year of its release. These all play a part in evaluating the performance of films from different eras against each other in the absence of hard financial data. Ticket price is also a factor - not just the annual average ticket price used in estimating admissions - but also recognising that a children's film, for example, will have more admissions for the same box office takings than an 18-certificate title due to its lower average ticket price. Piecing together this information has built up a fascinating picture of audience preferences in Britain.

The results of the top hundred films are shown in the table on this page.

So, it was bums on seats which counted and in the British Isles, more people saw *The Bells of St. Mary's* (1946) and *High Society* than any other movie featuring Bing. The 32nd placed *The Greatest Show on Earth* owes none of its success to Bing even though he can be fleetingly glimpsed eating popcorn at the circus.

Before looking in detail at the performance of Bing's films it's worthwhile making a few generalisations about the 'Ultimate Film Top 100'. Cinemagoing audiences in North America have a different profile to UK picturegoers. There is no way that *Spring In Park Lane* (1948) would figure in the top five hundred films in the USA yet that was the most popular British made film which appears on the list. The BFI list shows that the peak decade for going to the cinema was the 1940s. The peak year for ticket sales on both sides of the Atlantic was 1946. So there is no surprise in finding that 20% of movies on the list come from the 1940s.

The four most popular entertainers of the 20th century who spent time on sound stages as well as the recording studio are Crosby, Sinatra, Presley and Jolson. No Elvis film is represented. Sinatra's sole entry is in a film which starred him alongside Bing. Jolson's only showing is in the 1947 *Jolson Story*. There must have been an expectation that Jolson's starring role in *The*

Jazz Singer, the first important talking picture, would figure in the top 100 solely on the basis of audiences paying to see it out of curiosity. But the list relates to British cinemagoing habits and by the time picture houses in the UK were wired for sound the competition from "all talking, all singing, all dancing" feature films meant that Jolson no longer had it all his own way.

Which means that Bing comes out tops as a recording artist with a Hollywood base. But why did *The Bells of St. Mary's* and *High Society* sell more tickets in the UK than, say, *Holiday Inn*, *Blue Skies* or *White Christmas*?

With *Bells* the year of its release is part of the answer. Distributed in 1946, it was playing to audiences who were standing in line whatever the weather just to celebrate going out after six years of wartime deprivation. Husbands and wives, boyfriends and girlfriends were re-united. Many shared accommodation with family members and the privacy of three hours in the dark was a joy. As to why *The Bells of St. Mary's* was the only Hollywood product of 1946 to make the 100 list, the answer must be the combination of Bing and Ingrid Bergman. She was at the peak of her popularity and their pairing made them a great box-office attraction. The only other 1946 films on the list were *The Wicked Lady* and *Piccadilly Incident.* The British made production of *The Wicked Lady* sold three million more tickets than *Bells*, the majority of which can be attributed to the publicity generated by Margaret Lockwood's cleavage, a sight denied American viewers due to more stringent censorship rules.

The success of *High Society* is more understandable. It had both Frank Sinatra and Bing Crosby to entice ticket buyers. In both record sales and Hollywood movies, Sinatra was peaking just as Bing was retreating from the entertainment high ground he had held for the previous twenty years. Grace Kelly was also on cinematic display for the last time. Her marriage to Prince Rainier was news and that could have boosted ticket sales. *High Society* also enjoyed theatrical distribution long after its first screenings in the summer of 1956. I saw it on a double bill in the late 1960s when it was twinned with *Gigi*.

We all have our own personal Crosby film favourites. Now we know what enticed the British public from their armchairs fifty and sixty years ago.

Keith Parkinson

Is the BFI Right?

Your editor has some thoughts about this list. The BFI indicates that cinemas benefited in WW2 from the absence of most rival leisure activities, and, in the wake of its victorious conclusion, an all-time peak of 1,635 million admissions was reached in 1946 with a historical low of 54 million admissions being seen in 1984. So it was not unreasonable to expect to see Bing's top films featuring. What surprised me was the absence of the Road films, *White Christmas* and *Going My Way* in particular.

In BING #105 (December 1993), Keith looked at the box office performances of Bing's films and the UK figures he quoted were based on information from *Kine Weekly*. So I emailed the BFI when the results were shown on a linked Channel 4 programme and received a reply.

> *...If you would like to supply the data you have for the additional films you cite we will certainly keep it on file for future research or should this project be revisited at a later date.*

THE ULTIMATE FILM TOP 100

1 **Gone with the Wind** (1940) 35 million admissions
2 **The Sound of Music** (1965) 30m
3 **Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs** (1938) 28m
4 **Star Wars** (1978) 20.76m
5 **Spring in Park Lane** (1948) 20.5m
6 **The Best Years of Our Lives** (1947) 20.4
7 **The Jungle Book** (1968) 19.8m
8 **Titanic** (1998) 18.91m
9 **The Wicked Lady** (1946) 18.4m
10 **The Seventh Veil** (1945) 17.9m
11 **Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone** (2001) 17.56m
12 **Grease** (1978) 17.2m
13 **South Pacific** (1958) 16.5m
14 **Jaws** (1976) 16.2m
15 **Jurassic Park** (1993) 16.17m
16 **Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring** (2001) 15.98m
17 **The Courtneys of Curzon Street** (1947) 15.9m
18 **Thunderball** (1966) 15.6m
19 **Lord of the Rings: Return of the King** (2003) 15.22m
20 **The Bells of St Mary's** (1946) 15.2m
21 **The Ten Commandments** (1957) 15m
22 **Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers** (2002) 14.4m
23 **The Full Monty** (1997) 14.19m
24 **Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets** (2002) 14.18m
25 **Mary Poppins** (1964) 14m
26 **The Third Man** (1949) 14m
27 **Goldfinger** (1964) 13.9m
28 **Star Wars Episode 1: The Phantom Menace** (1999) 13.59m
29 **The Blue Lamp** (1950) 13.3m
30 **Ben Hur** (1959) 13.2m
31 **E.T** (1983) 13.13m
32 **The Greatest Show on Earth** (1952) 13m
33 **The Bridge on the River Kwai** (1957) 12.6m
34 **The Spy Who Loved Me** (1977) 12.46m
35 **The Great Caruso** (1951) 12.4m
36 **Doctor in the House** (1954) 12.2m
37 **Toy Story 2** (2000) 12.18m
38 **Random Harvest** (1943) 12m
39 **The Towering Inferno** (1975) 11.78m
40 **Fanny by Gaslight** (1944) 11.7m
41 **The Jolson Story** (1947) 11.6m
42 **Piccadilly Incident** (1946) 11.5m

NUMBER ONE: GONE WITH THE WIND, 1940

43 **The Guns of Navarone** (1961) 11.4m
44 **Dr. Zhivago** (1967) 11.2m
45 **The Sting** (1974) 11.08m
46 **The Godfather** (1972) 11m
47 **Independence Day** (1996) 10.79m
48 **Carry on Nurse** (1959) 10.4m
49 **I Live in Grosvenor Square** (1945) 10.3m
50 **Mrs Miniver** (1942) 10.2m
51 **Superman** (1979) 10.19m
52 **Bridget Jones's Diary** (2001) 10.15m
53 **Monsters Inc** (2002) 9.93m
54 **A Clockwork Orange** (1972) 9.9m
55 **Crocodile Dundee** (1987) 9.8m
56 **Finding Nemo** (2003) 9.79m
57 **Men in Black** (1997) 9.73m
58 **For Whom the Bell Tolls** (1944) 9.7m
59 **One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest** (1976) 9.65m
60 **High Society** (1956) 9.6m
61 **Moonraker** (1979) 9.41m
62 **I'm All Right Jack** (1959) 9.4m
63 **49th Parallel** (1941) 9.3m
64 **Lost Horizon** (1937) 9.2m
65 **Star Wars Episode 2: Attack of the Clones** (2002) 9.16m
66 **101 Dalmatians** (1961) 9.1m
67 **The Empire Strikes Back** (1980) 9.09
68 **Saturday Night Fever** (1978) 9.02m
69 **Live and Let Die** (1973) 9m
70 **The Great Dictator** (1941) 9m
71 **The Big Country** (1958) 9m
72 **Bambi** (1942) 9m
73 **Rebecca** (1940) 8.9m
74 **Oliver!** (1968) 8.9m
75 **Four Weddings and a Funeral** (1994) 8.81m
76 **Ghost** (1990) 8.78m
77 **Love Actually** (2003)8.76m
78 **Reach for the Sky** (1956) 8.7m
79 **My Fair Lady** (1965) 8.6m
80 **Die Another Day** (2002) 8.58m
81 **Close Encounters of the Third Kind** (1978) 8.54m
82 **The Citadel** (1939) 8.5m
83 **Pinocchio** (1940) 8.5m
84 **A Bug's Life** (1999) 8.41m
85 **Lawrence of Arabia** (1962) 8.4m
86 **The Dambusters** (1955) 8.4m
87 **Return of the Jedi** (1983) 8.35m
88 **Mr Deeds Goes to Town** (1936) 8.3m
89 **The Swiss Family Robinson** (1960) 8.3m
90 **You Only Live Twice** (1967) 8.3m
91 **The Exorcist** (1974) 8.3m
92 **The King and I** (1956) 8.2m
93 **Chicken Run** (2000) 8.12m
94 **The Lion King** (1994) 8.08m
95 **Notting Hill** (1999) 8.05m
96 **The Matrix Reloaded** (2003) 7.96m
97 **The Private Life of Henry VIII** (1934) 7.9m
98 **Cinderella** (1951) 7.9m
99 **Gladiator** (2000) 7.8m
100 **The Magnificent Seven** (1960) 7.7m

Compiled by the British Film Institute

So I fired off another missive.

... The information we were working to was from Kine Weekly as follows.
1942 Holiday Inn ranked 5th in the box office attendances.
1944 Going My Way ranked 4th.
1946 The Bells of St. Mary's' ranked 2nd (you showed this in 20th place)
1947 Blue Skies ranked in the top ten
1948 Road to Rio ranked 4th.
1953 Road to Bali ranked 2nd
1955 White Christmas ranked 2nd
1957 High Society ranked 1st. (You had this at No. 60)

Bearing in mind overall attendance figures for the years in question, the films must have had a sufficiently high number to come within your top 100. In addition Holiday Inn and Going My Way both had a major re-release in the late 40s which must have swelled the figures considerably. Was Kine Weekly reliable?

Which brought the following response from the BFI.

Thank you for your further e-mail and your data from Kine Weekly on Bing Crosby films.

As you may have seen on our website, the Kine Weekly annual rankings were one of the key general sources we referred to when compiling the Ultimate Film list and we would by no means say that the Kine Weekly was unreliable. A good part of our research involved looking at the annual ratings across a range of sources, in many cases (although by no means all) there was approximate agreement across the sources and where this was the case it was taken into account when estimating the performance of films. In the majority of cases, films that did not finish in the top two for the year have not made the chart. It is also the case that in some years (but not others) the top film(s) were clear box office successes above the rest of the field. It should also be noted that the top films of 1940s (when cinemagoing was at its peak) took a much smaller share of the total annual box office than do the dominant hits of the current era, which goes some way to explain the fact the chart is not completely dominated by films of the 1940s. We did also take the re-releasing of films into account, as you rightly point out this phenomenon was prevalent in previous eras.

Thank you for your interest, and we hope this information goes some way to addressing your queries.

So, on their basis *Road To Bali* and *White Christmas,* as they both came in the top 2, should presumably have featured! The BFI acknowledges that they cannot really be certain of the results they have published and sadly I fear that we shall have to disregard the numbers shown by this in common with many other recent league tables. And it's not a case of us only accepting figures that show the results we want as we do try to be open-minded about such matters.

But what about the USA box office returns I hear you asking? What figures do we have for American bums on seats? Here's a league table we do like! In February, using data from 72 years of the Quigley Publishing Company's annual Top Ten Money-Making Star Poll of motion picture exhibitors, the Top Money-Makers of All Time were named. The Quigley Poll, conducted every year since 1932, is an annual survey of motion picture exhibitors, which asks them to vote for the ten stars that generated the most box-office revenue in the preceding year for their theatres. Long regarded as one of the most reliable indicators of a Star's box-office draw, the Quigley Poll has been cited in hundreds of publications and appears annually in Quigley Publishing Company's International Motion Picture Almanac and on their site; www.quigleypublishing.com.

To come up with a weighted score, an actor received 10 points for a first place finish, nine for a second place finish, etc. The total score was determined by adding up the weighted scores from each year that the actor was voted on the list. John Wayne's appearance 25 times in the poll from 1949 to 1974 yielded 172 points versus 165 points for second place Clint Eastwood, who has been on the list 21 times. Tom Cruise placed third with 133.5 points combining six first place finishes with 16 appearances on the QP poll and was closely followed by Bing. Of the current active stars, it appears that only Clint Eastwood and Tom Cruise have a reasonable chance of overtaking John Wayne in the future. Perhaps reflecting shorter careers in Hollywood than men, no women made it into the Top Ten.

The top ten were:

1	John Wayne	172
2	Clint Eastwood	165
3	Tom Cruise	133.5
4	Bing Crosby	111
5	Gary Cooper	106.5
6	Clark Gable	95
7	Burt Reynolds	90
8	Tom Hanks (Tie)	83
	Bob Hope (Tie)	83
10	Paul Newman	76

This matches up in parts with a survey of the top movie box office stars of the twentieth century, based on estimated ticket sales over the years, which was published on the Internet by tlavideo.comm in 1999, and showed the following:

Star	**estimated ticket sales**
1. Clark Gable	1,168,300,000
2. John Wayne	1,114,000,000
3. Bing Crosby	1,077,900,000
4. James Stewart	981,900,000
5. Cary Grant	942,500,000
6. Spencer Tracy	937,200,000
7. Gary Cooper	878,600,000
8. Mickey Rooney	867,900,000
9. Harrison Ford	852,700,000
10. Gregory Peck	728,000,000

Cinema admissions were, as previously stated, much higher in the years before television which perhaps helps to explain why so few of today's stars are in the top ten in this particular chart. Clark Gable's top position must owe much to the incredible success of *Gone With The Wind* and John Wayne's prolific and long career deservedly puts him in second position. It is a real tribute to Bing's popularity over many years to see him so well placed above those who are more often perceived as the legendary Hollywood greats.

Malcolm Macfarlane

THE A-Z OF BING'S MOVIES

RATHBONE, BASIL (1892-1967) Actor. Rathbone appeared on screen with Bing in *Rhythm on the River* (1940). Third billed in the role of Oliver Courtney he played a bogus songwriter who had to rely on others to act as ghostwriters in order for him to maintain his deception. There is another Crosby film link because Rathbone was the narrator of the Mister Toad half of the Disney cartoon *The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad* (1949). Bing was Ichabod's narrator. Rathbone's appearance in *Rhythm on the River* came when he was beginning to make his mark as Sherlock Holmes. He'd already starred in the first two of the series and a further dozen modestly budgeted features followed. When the Holmes films had run their course he played the detective in a series of half hour shows on American radio. There have been more accurate portrayals of Conan Doyle's investigating detective but for cinemagoers Rathbone is the Sherlock against whom all others are compared and found wanting. Rathbone entered films as early as 1921 when he appeared in the British film *Innocent.* Three years later he moved to Hollywood and was rarely off the screen for the next forty years. In the 1950s he played in two films which did justice to his talent: *We're No Angels* (1955) and *The Court Jester* (1956). Then he fell from favour. By the 1960s he was lending his name to cheap horror films and his final film appearance in the year of his death indicates how far he had fallen. It was *Hillbillys in a Haunted House.* Rathbone earned two Oscar nominations for Best Supporting Actor as Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet* (1936) and as King Louis XI in *If I Were King* (1938).

RAYE, DON [Donald MacRae Wilhoite] (1909-1985) Vaudevillian who became a nightclub performer, went to University to study advertising and finally settled on songwriting as a career. With music provided by Gene de Paul he provided the story related lyrics to the three songs featured in Bing's Ichabod half of Disney's *The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad* (1949). The songs, all recorded by Bing at the end of 1947 were "Ichabod", "Katrina" and "The Headless Horseman". Raye's best remembered and most frequently recorded compositions are "Beat Me Daddy, Eight to the Bar", "Domino" and "I'll Remember April".

RAYE, MARTHA [Margaret Teresa Yvonne Reed] (1916-1994) Actress. Between May of 1936 and July of the following year Bing saw as much of Martha Raye as he did any other female performer. In *Rhythm on the Range* (1936) she played Emma Mazda who was romantically paired with Bob Burns. For *Waikiki Wedding* (1937) she played Myrtle Finch who travelled to Hawaii with her friend Shirley Ross. And then, as Liza Lou Lane, she was in *Double or Nothing* (1937). That trio of parts saw her being third or fourth billed in fairly substantial roles considering she made her screen debut in the first one. She was also given a vocal solo in each of the Crosby movies which proved she had a strident delivery that could challenge Jerry Colonna any day of the week. She must have known at an early age that any ambitions to become a leading lady would be severally hampered by her Joe E. Brown sized mouth. Perhaps that's why she was seldom seen on the big screen after 1944. She made a couple of comebacks where she saw the part had promise. The first was in 1947 when she was in Chaplin's *Monsieur Verdoux*, the second in 1962 for the musical *Jumbo.* She was not quite so careful in choosing her last two film appearances, a cameo in *The Phynx* (1970) and *The Concorde: Airport '79* (1979) when that short series of aeroplane disaster films had run out of original ideas. Although absent from films for long periods of time she was never out of the public eye. She entertained troops during World War II, Korea and Vietnam. She was in four television series between 1959 and 1984. She played on Broadway in two major musicals: "Hello Dolly" in 1967 and a revival of "No, No, Nanette" in 1972. And whilst all that was going on she worked her way through seven husbands. The first was make-up specialist Bud Westmore who, at age 19, was assigned to *Rhythm on the Range.* The couple eloped to Las Vegas immediately filming concluded and stayed together for three months before divorcing. Marriage to musician David Rose followed some time later. It must have been her showbusiness commitments that made her comment, "I didn't have to work till I was three, but after that I never stopped."

REACHING FOR THE MOON Film. This 1930 starrer for Douglas Fairbanks and Bebe Daniels shoehorned in a musical sequence which was intended to be sung by Bebe Daniels until it was realised that it was outside her musical capabilities. At the time the film was being shot, Bing and the Rhythm Boys were singing at the Cocoanut Grove. And so the film cameras were taken to the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, which was situated not too far from the film studio, and a scene featuring Bing, Bebe and June McCloy was filmed where the trio sang "When the Folks up High do the Mean Low Down". Irving Berlin wrote the song and neither Bing (nor anyone else for that matter) thought it worth recording for release on record. The film was re-issued in 1946 with advertising prominence being given to Bing's appearance, something the 1930 on-screen credits failed to note. The Crosby sequence from the film has been seen subsequently in film and television compilations.

REED, THEODORE (1887-1959) Production manager turned director. Now forgotten or ignored, Theodore Reed was employed as production manager on several of Douglas Fairbanks' highly successful silent films in the 1920s. He was employed by Paramount in 1932 as an assistant producer and persuaded that studio to use him as a director. His directorial debut for the studio was *Lady be Careful* in 1936. His second film for Paramount was the Bing Crosby/Mary Carlisle starrer *Double or Nothing* made the following year. Thereafter he took on light inconsequential assignments from the studio before drifting from the

Hollywood scene towards the end of the 1940s.

RENNAHAN, RAY (1896-1980) Expert colour cinematographer. If the expert adjective requires justification watch his Bing films, *King of Jazz* (1930), *Starnight At The Cocoanut Grove* (1934) and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1949). The early two-colour Technicolor treatment sticks in the mind long after viewing *King of Jazz* whilst the rich colours of *Connecticut Yankee* enrich the filmic experience as well as Rhonda Fleming's locks. Rennahan's peers recognised his expertise, hence the Academy Awards he won for *Gone With the Wind* (1939) and *Blood and Sand* (1941).

REVEL, HARRY (1905-1958) Composer. With words by Mack Gordon, Harry Revel provided melodies for three Bing films of the mid-1930s. They were:
We're Not Dressing (1934): May I; Once in a Blue Moon; Love Thy Neighbour; She Reminds Me of You; Goodnight, Lovely Little Lady
She Loves Me Not (1934): I'm Hummin', I'm Whistlin', I'm Singin'; Straight from the Shoulder
Two For Tonight (1935): Two for Tonight; I Wish I Were Aladdin; From the Top of Your Head; Takes Two to Make a Bargain; Without a Word of Warning
Those songs either captured or created the Bing Crosby film song stylist of the early Paramount years. Revel was born in London and at age fifteen was living in Paris, playing in an Hawaiian band. He went to the USA in 1929 and almost immediately teamed up with Mack Gordon. By 1932 they were spending most of their professional lives writing specifically for Hollywood films. Bing recorded one of their early efforts, "It's Within Your Power" in 1932. The following year he had a hit with the duo's "Did You Ever See a Dream Walking" but after their *Two For Tonight* score the only other Revel song he recorded was "Never in a Million Years" in 1937.

REYNOLDS, ADELINE DE WALT (1862-1961) Actress. She was responsible for bringing a lump to the throat and a tear to the eye in *Going My Way* (1944). In that film she played the mother of Barry Fitzgerald and was on the receiving end of the Bob Mitchell Boys Choir rendition of "Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral" at the film's end. Six years later she popped up briefly in the role of Aunt Amy for *Here Comes the Groom.* Adeline De Walt Reynolds began acting at the age of 78 and made her film debut in 1941 with *Come Live With Me.* By the time she was cast in *Here Comes the Groom* she was believed to be the oldest working actress in Hollywood.

REYNOLDS, DEBBIE [Mary Frances Reynolds] (1932-) Actress who sang a little. Discounting *Pepe* (1960) and *That's Entertainment* (1974), Debbie Reynolds was in one Crosby film. That was the less than successful *Say One For Me* (1959) in which she was second billed as Holly LeMaise and as such got to sing the film's title song with Bing and "The Secret of Christmas" with Bing and Robert Wagner. She entered films in 1948 after winning a Miss Burbank beauty

Martha Raye and Bing in Rhythm On The Range

contest, making her debut in *June Bride*. Her film peak was probably *Singin' in the Rain* (1952) although her hit recording of "Tammy" served to boost the popularity of that otherwise routine 1957 light comedy film. Some worthy if less than memorable performances followed in such as *How the West was Won* (1962), *The Unsinkable Molly Brown* (1964) and *The Singing Nun* (1966). By 1971 she was making the run of the mill thriller *What's the Matter with Helen?* Before things became too dire she switched to the musical stage and also established a museum of Hollywood artefacts. Somehow she never fulfilled her initial promise, perhaps because she refused to age gracefully. Even with the skills of the Westmores and the make-up of Max Factor no one can look 29 forever. Her private life is well documented in her own autobiography as well as in two by one of her three ex-husbands, Eddie Fisher.

REYNOLDS, MARJORIE [Marjorie Goodspeed] (1917-1997) Actress. In *Holiday Inn* (1942) we know that by the end of that film Marjorie Reynolds, playing the part of Linda Mason., is the only girl for Bing. The following year, despite the competition from Dorothy Lamour, she became Jean Mason and again secured Bing for her future. Her other Paramount films with Bing's name in the cast were *College Humor* (1933, as an uncredited dancer), *Star Spangled Rhythm* (1942) and *Duffy's Tavern* (1945) although the two did not share screen time. She was in silent films from the age of six when she appeared in *Scaramouche* (1923). Her peak years were her years in Crosby films and when she was finding work hard to come by in the 1950s she resorted to lending her name to such as *Mobs Inc.* (1956) and *Juke Box Rhythm* (1959). By then she had found that television provided a career revival of sorts when she was seen weekly as the wife of William Bendix in "The Life of Riley" (1953-58).

RHYTHM BOYS, THE Vocal trio comprising Bing, Harry Barris and Al Rinker. They were together in four films, starting with *King of Jazz* in 1930. In that debut they were heard briefly on "Music Hath Charms" and seen and heard on "Mississippi Mud", "So the Bluebirds and the Blackbirds got Together", "A Bench in the Park" and "Happy Feet" with minor contributions in conjunction with the rest of the orchestra to "How I'd Like to Own a Fish Store" and "Old Black Joe". On release around the same time was an RKO short, *Two Plus Fours,* which featured the Boys singing "The Stein Song". The following months found their recording of "Three Little Words" used in RKO's film *Check and Double Check* with members of the band lip-synching to it and them taking what amounted to a guest spot in *Confessions of a Co-ed* which featured "Ya Got Love". The Rhythm Boys were also featured in a one-reel RKO Radio *Humanette* short which used their faces on punch and judy dolls. A guest spot for the Universal production *Many A Slip* was deleted before the film's release. That Bing was destined for solo fame can be detected around this time. He was the only one of the trio given an opportunity to sing on his own in *King of Jazz* and *Confessions of a Co-ed.* Bing continued an on-screen relationship with Harry Barris by arranging for him to have minor parts in Crosby features until the mid-1940s.

RHYTHM ON THE RANGE Film. This 1936 Paramount release made "Variety's" list of top grossing films of the year and saw the emergence of Bing as a performer whose name in the cast list could guarantee box office clout. It is interesting now for its cast as it is for Bing's magnetic performance. When he is on screen his presence is riveting but he faces strong competition from Frances Farmer. It was her first film part. In later life she battled with alcohol problems and spent several years in an insane asylum but in *Rhythm on the Range* she is loved by the camera. After her death of cancer in 1970 Bing remembered her as not having quite mastered the technique of film acting, finding it hard to maintain a characterisation whilst filming in short unrelated sequences and being in a permanent state of nervousness. That nervousness was more likely to be shyness. It is unfortunate that the duet of "The House that Jack Built for Jill" by Crosby and Farmer was filmed but omitted from the release print. Another performer at the birth of his film career in *Rhythm on the Range* was Roy Rogers, who, as Leonard Slye, was one of the Sons of the Pioneers. They sing "Drink it Down" in the film. Martha Raye was fourth billed in the picture even though it was her film debut. Director Norman Taurog and studio heads Adolph Zukor and Darryl Zanuck had seen her night club act and wrote her into the film's plot. Making an early appearance on film is Louis Prima, whilst "I'm an Old Cowhand" is the first Johnny Mercer composition to be featured in a film by Bing. And there is Bud Flanagan, who has a bit part of a heckler in the film. He was an American who soon discovered that a similarly named member of Britain's Crazy Gang was famous on the other side of the Atlantic. He changed his name to Dennis O'Keefe the following year and enjoyed the next thirty years as an actor specialising in action movies. All of which is not to detract from the performance of *Rhythm's* leading man. Bing made the film as far as audiences were concerned. An early edition of the "Radio Times Film and Video Guide" sums it up better than I can with the comment, "good clean thigh-slappin' fun all round, and enough infectious tunes to keep you whistling for days to come."

RHYTHM ON THE RANGE Song written for the film of the same name by Richard Whiting and Walter Bullock but not utilised.

Keith Parkinson

Bing on the soundtrack

Allan Weinstein was the first to tell us that two Bing songs are heard in the new Martin Scorsese film *The Aviator.* The songs are 'Thanks' and 'Some Of These Days', one complete chorus of each. The scat chorus from the latter is also included but is obscured by dialogue while it's playing.

Greg Van Beek picked up a copy of the Columbia/Sony soundtrack CD and commented:

> "Bing's 1933 recording of "Thanks" appears on the album, and in my opinion, it's one of the best mono transfers of the song I've ever heard. The sound is crisp and clear. Also appearing on the album are original recordings by Glenn Miller ("Moonlight Serenade"), Artie Shaw ("Nightmare"), Harry James ("Back Beat Boogie"), The Ink Spots ("Do I Worry?"), Benny Goodman ("Moonglow"), and even The Original Memphis Five with two vintage 1929 recordings ("Fireworks", "Somebody Stole My Gal"). There's also a new recreation of the Rhythm

Boys' recording of "Happy Feet" by a group called The Manhattan Rhythm Kings. All in all, one of the most enjoyable new motion picture soundtrack albums I've heard in a long time."

BING CROSBY'S RESTAURANT OPENS

We mentioned the forthcoming opening of this new restaurant in Walnut Creek, California in our last issue and a prestigious launch duly took place on November 27 attended by Kathryn Crosby and several of our members. Judy Schmid (married name Koenig - just to avoid confusion) was the first to send a report.

"Schmoenig" Family (Judy Schmid, Stew Koenig, daughter Maura Koenig) accompanied Kathryn Crosby and her sister-in-law Marie Grandstaff to a private pre-opening party hosted by Kathryn's friend Ginnie Anderson - many of us met Ginnie at Hofstra and/or Gonzaga. The party's theme, of course, was "White Christmas" - it was wonderful stepping into a house already decorated "to the nines" in tasteful holiday décor and hearing all the decades of Bing's voice singing in the background - how could it be bad?

As the restaurant opening time approached, we gathered ourselves back up, slipped back into the limousine (my daughter was in heaven!) and headed to the next stop. The restaurant itself is in a very high-end shopping plaza and it's right on the corner so people can see it as they enter the plaza. The decor is tasteful 1940s design as if done by the Paramount team. Live piano music featured many of Bing's hits - and slipped into other songs from the "Great American Songbook" as the evening progressed. The owners spoke about their belief in the restaurant's theme and how they're opening the next of five planned California restaurants, all targeted in similar high-income neighborhoods - next restaurant will open a year from now. Local politicians were introduced, and then Kathryn took the stage, bringing the crowd along with songs almost everyone knew (granted - there were a few twenty-somethings who were along for the ride, but seemed to be enjoying us singing along!) Here, too, the decorations invoked the "White Christmas" theme.

Photos taken from dozens of private Crosby family film scrapbooks - photos not often seen by the public - were enlarged and framed and displayed on almost every square inch of the restaurant. Twenty-foot ceilings showcased huge images of Bing from the 30s and 40s - very 'hip'! The sportsman Bing was shown in different corners of the restaurant - with the first batch of boys and with the younger family - two large screens showed continual Bing-films and the bar will feature 74 different martinis - one for every year of Bing's life (they're still building up to that - they're up to 38, I believe!)

The party was scheduled to end at 9 p.m. but it was still roaring along at 10:30 when we left. Hobie and Cathie Wilson were there, along with the constantly videotaping Priscilla Koernig - it was nice seeing them again! Kathryn's sister, Frances Ruth and her husband, Bing's niece Carolyn Pool Scheider and her husband Duke, were there too. And Eileen Bell-Garrison, library dean at Gonzaga, and her husband Ken were in attendance - they'd loaned some items to the restaurant for display.

Judy Schmid (left) and her daughter, Maura, get the drinks in.

The place looks classy - the food was very tasty - the waitstaff was exceedingly friendly - I hope they have lots of success - putting Bing's image and music and films out where young people AND older people will dine and drink seems like a good start to keeping Bing "alive" in American culture!

Judy Schmid

Lorne Harasen was another who received an invitation and he gave us his thoughts on the event.

My first reaction when I got the invitation to the opening was enthusiasm for the "genius" that prompted the concept. What a great idea and what a great way to place Bing's memorabilia within reach of his fans and the general public.

On entering the restaurant I was immediately and favorably impressed with the decor and general layout of the restaurant and piano lounge. It's casual and classy. Just like Bing! The pictures on the walls dominate and properly so. Many of the photos are well known but there is a plethora of others that were not familiar to me and I thought I had seen all of them. Again, the exercise would not have meant much if Kathryn had not been there. She has charisma and she provides such an important living link with the great man. Kathryn sang some of Bing's songs and interacted with the guests in a

graceful and approachable way. She was in darn good voice at least as far as I was concerned.

I went back to the restaurant the next day because I wanted to see it in the working mode and I must say that the good vibes of the previous evening returned. I like the place! I hope that those who manage and work there will be conscious of the fact that the quality of service, food, drink and prices will all reflect somewhat on the "patron" of the place. I suspect that many clients will at least subconsciously relate their own image of Bing to the way they feel when they leave the premises.

I don't get on the air waves very much any more but when I do I will recommend to those from here who winter in California that they give the Bing Crosby Restaurant and Piano Lounge in Walnut Creek, California a try. The pictures alone are worth a visit. I think that Bing would like the place. It was a whirlwind trip for me but I was glad I went if only to visit awhile with the lady who remains devoted to her husband who has now been gone for a quarter century. Good job Kathryn!

Lorne Harasen

(Editor: We have now learned that a similar tribute restaurant to Bing is slated to open in Rancho Mirage, California in January 2006. Bing Crosby's Restaurant & Piano Lounge will be built at the southwest corner of Highway 111 and Rancho Las Palmas Drive by Dudum Sports & Entertainment of Walnut Creek. The three-and-a-half acre parcel will be owned by The Alamo Group, which also will develop what it describes as a high-end retail center on the property. Great news!)

The MCA Legal Battle (update)

We noticed a couple of relevant articles in legal publications in January as the California Supreme Court heard oral arguments prior to considering its verdict. The ruling in *HLC Properties Ltd. v. Superior Court (MCA Records Inc.)*, S120332, was eventually announced on February 14 and here's the report by David Watson in the February 15 edition of the Metropolitan News.

State Supreme Court Rules: Bing Crosby Estate Could Not Pass On Attorney-Client Privilege

Singer Bing Crosby's estate could not pass his attorney-client privilege on to a partnership formed after his death to manage his recording contracts and other business interests, the state Supreme Court ruled yesterday.

The high court unanimously rejected a claim of attorney-client privilege by HLC Properties, Limited. Crosby's executor and his second wife transferred a number of his business assets, including three recording contracts, to HLC in 1980, three years after the legendary performer died.

Crosby's real name was Harry Lillis Crosby.

HLC sued MCA Records, Inc., Universal Studios, Inc., and two other companies in 2000, claiming they owed Crosby royalty payments. When MCA sought documents from HLC and Crosby's former lawyers, O'Melveny & Myers, for use in the litigation, HLC claimed some of them were protected by attorney-client privilege.

Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Terry B. Friedman ruled the privilege expired when the probate of Crosby's estate was terminated, but in September of 2003 this district's Court of Appeal disagreed.

Justice Richard M. Mosk said that a group of Crosby's business managers, not Crosby himself, was the client. He noted that under Evidence Code Sec. 953(d), the holder of the privilege is defined to include the "successor" of an "organization - that is no longer in existence."

Thus, Mosk reasoned, HLC was entitled to assert the privilege.

Yesterday the Supreme Court agreed with Friedman.

Crosby, not his managers, was the O'Melveny client, Justice Marvin Baxter said. He noted that even the privilege logs filed by the law firm and HLC identified Crosby as the client.

Crosby also signed the three recording contracts in his individual capacity and they were probated as part of his estate, Baxter observed.

While his business managers did use the term "Bing Crosby Enterprises" to refer to his business interests in general, the key manager described that usage in his deposition testimony as "just a loose terminology" to "cover everything that [Crosby] did," Baxter explained.

The record, he said, contained "no evidence" that any entity other than Crosby personally employed the managers and staff of "Bing Crosby Enterprises" or paid their salaries and benefits.

"In sum," he declared, "the record contains substantial evidence supporting the trial court's determination that a natural person, Crosby, was the original client who held the attorney-client privilege for the communications pertaining to his three recording contracts. Likewise, the evidence fails to demonstrate, as a matter of law, that Enterprises was the client of the named attorneys with interests of its own or its collective members to protect."

Baxter went on to reject HLC's contention that the estate was an "organization" the privileges of which could pass to a "successor" within the meaning of Sec. 953(d).

"Were we to adopt HLC's position," he wrote, "the attorney-client privilege of natural persons would survive distribution of their estates and would extend to persons and entities beyond their personal representatives. Regardless whether other statutory schemes categorize estates as organizations for other distinct legislative purposes, our doing so here would nullify section 953's specific limitation on who may hold the privilege 'if the client is dead.' It also would defeat the legislative mandate calling for the privilege to terminate when a client has died, the personal representative has been discharged, and there is no longer anyone to hold the privilege."

We await further news on the dispute with MCA in due course.

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters received since the last issue

Keith Parkinson, St. Helens, UK

Another fine issue of BING which will satisfy ICC members on an international basis. I take for granted the photographs that are reproduced in the magazine but looking through the current issue thanks should be passed to Ron and everyone else involved for constantly finding less familiar shots to illustrate the articles. My own efforts displayed a couple of pictures new to me but totally relevant to the text.

It was a good idea to reprint Pat Forster's recollections of Bing's 1977 Palladium concerts. It revived memories and detailed each concert without seeming in the least repetitive. Bob Achorn provided part of a review of Gary Giddins' Crosby book from Terry Teachout which criticised Gary because he "lacks the technical knowledge to explain fully what he is hearing". Thanks goodness for that. The Giddins book was immensely readable because Gary had the capability to convey Bing's vocal skills without resorting to dense musical analyses.

A final thought as I must not forget to congratulate Ron Bosley on the great pictures he has used in the 2005 calendar. Marvellous!

(Editor: I can only echo Keith's comments on the many interesting photos Ron manages to produce. We are very lucky to have someone like Ron providing material for us.

In the Summer 1996 edition of BINGANG, there was an excellent article by Father Bob Murphy who described a visit to Bing's home on New Year's Day, 1969. Bob has been in touch again...)

Father Bob Murphy, Grandview, MO, USA

...I'm pleased to say that I have kept up with Kathryn Crosby through the years. Twice she has come through Kansas City in touring Broadway shows. I've been able to reconnect with her on each occasion. I've picked her up at her hotel and brought her to mass at my parish. On my 25th anniversary as a priest, she was kind enough to call me with congratulations. I'll still remember the morning of my ordination when a telegram came from Bing and Kathryn with their prayers and best wishes.

About a year ago, I visited a friend of mine, Ken Bien (the friend who went with me to Bing's home in 1969). He is the mayor of Rancho Santa Fe and a past president of the Golf Club where the Crosby Pro-Am began. He took me to the new Crosby Estates Development. This is a series of luxury homes in a gated community. All the streets are named after Bing's movies. You can live at the comer of *Going My Way* and *Blue Skies*! Ken is a retired executive and a great golfer. He has had both Kathryn and Nathaniel out to Rancho Santa Fe.

I have sent copies of many of my letters from Bing and Kathryn to Gary Giddins for use if he so chooses in volume two of his biography of Bing. I told him I wanted to show, by the letters, how Bing was so supportive of me through my seminary years. Kathryn told me a few years ago that it meant the world to him that his portrayal of Father O'Malley had influenced a young man to go to the seminary.

Windy Ferguson, Martinsville, VA, USA

Hi, I am 24 years old. I have been a fan of Bing's for almost ten years. I started listening to Bing when I was 14. It was almost Christmas in 1994. I actually have my grandmother to thank for discovering him. We were going Christmas shopping, and she was playing a tape of Christmas songs by different artists – one of these being "White Christmas," sung by him. I absolutely loved what I heard. I really loved his voice! It was so beautiful. 'That man can really sing like no one else!' I thought. I was mesmerized, and hooked instantly. I listened to that song and other of his Christmas songs many, many, times. Of course, my grandmother bought me the "White Christmas" album, right then and there. I fell in love, big time! Over the years I've collected anything I could, movies books, music, etc. I'm glad to be a part of a support group like the ICC which would do anything to support the man and to keep his memory and music alive for future generations.

(Editor: How nice to receive Windy's letter. Another heart-warming message was received by the Bing Crosby Internet Museum on November 10.)

Pat McFadden, as written on the Bulletin Board of the Bing Crosby Internet Museum.

Enough of the 'slagging' of Bing. Here's what he was at heart.

My grandad was "Bill" Merrill of Hillsboro, Oregon. He was a professional horse breeder and raced both "bang-tails" and harness racing. One week Bill was in southern California at one of the tracks frequented by Bing. Apparently, Bing owned or had a big interest in this track. Grandad was grooming the horses in the rented stalls when a man approached and began a conversation. The topics went from Spokane to of course, horses and Bill's farm and stables in Hillsboro, Oregon. They concluded a pleasant chat, and Bill never got the man's name, until he went to pay the bill for stables and feed for his stay.

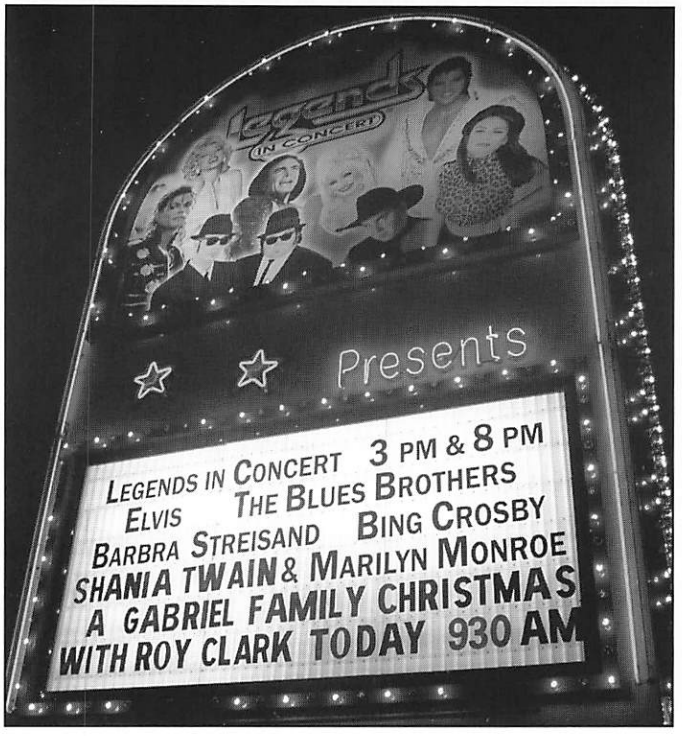
The secretary pulled Bill's account card and stated: "Mr. Crosby says there will be no charge for your stay." These were post Depression years, and every dime counted. I never knew grandad Bill, but Bing's kindness will ring true in our family for as long as we have anything to say about it!

God Bless Bing's memory!

Perry Huntoon, Naperville, IL, USA

On a recent trip to Branson, Missouri to catch the holiday show with the Les Brown band, I was amused to see Bing's name appearing on a theater marquee. While it is common to see performers imitating Elvis and "Ol' Blue Eyes," we don't see many references to Bing particularly at 'live' venues. I did not attend this show, but am happy to report that impressionist Bob Anderson performed a delightful imitation of Bing singing "White Christmas" at the Les Brown show, which also had many personal references by Les, Jr. regarding his touring with Bob Hope's USO troupes. Les Brown, Jr. looks very much like his father and the band was

excellent.



Elizabeth Gregory, South Croydon, Surrey, UK

I thought that you might be interested in the following little item concerning Bing.

On the 30th November I sent off for a Bing Crosby set of 3 CDs plus a free Christmas CD as advertised by Music & Memories magazine which caters for easy listening music. This was to be a present for my son who has recently become a Bing fan and I waited patiently for this to be delivered. On the 6th January I received a letter from them saying:

> *"We regret to inform you due to unprecedented demand, we are temporarily out of stock of this item. Further supplies are. however, expected shortly."*

Perhaps it was the free Christmas CD which did it, but nevertheless, it is nice to know that Bing is still very popular.

John Walton, Lincoln, UK (by e-mail)

I thought you might be interested in a mention of Bing I've come across in a current specialist publication.

It's in the second edition of 'Care For The Professional Voice' (2004), by D. Garfield Davies (UCL Hospitals, London) and Anthony F. Jahn (Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York). The book consists of 164 pages of detailed technical information to assist professional singers and actors to maximise the use of their voices with the minimum of wear and tear. It is published in London by A & C Black *(www.acblack.com).*

On pages 65-66, at the beginning of a section headed, 'Management Of The Popular Singer's Voice', they write:

> *'It is worth reflecting that much of the distinctive character, personality and identity of the performer relates to the uniqueness of the sound of his or her voice. That sound is often the product of a lifetime of vocal abuse, frequently abetted by smoking and drinking and rarely relieved by vocal training. Such voices repeatedly require medical help since they are unstable and give out under any stress or after any mild infection. The aim here is to get certain performers over the ability to perform without substantially changing the image of the voice. It is no use to surgically create anatomically immaculate vocal folds if the patient's sound, which is his signature, has disappeared. A performer's reputation is built on a particular sound, which may be generated by a larynx with nodules, polyps or even false vocal fold activity. It is well known that Bing Crosby had vocal fold nodules, each one (jokingly) estimated to be worth several million dollars.'*

This is possibly relevant to the recent debate on the *Bing Crosby Internet Museum* website as to whether Bing's nodules were actually operated upon or not. Elsewhere in the book, the authors say that nodules are best left alone if the singer or actor is not worried about their effect on the sound they achieve (though I have read elsewhere that they can predispose the sufferer to malignant throat conditions).

(Editor: Amazing where Bing pops up. However I'm fairly sure that Bing never did have an operation on his nodules and in view of the above, it's a good job that he didn't.)

BING'S DECLINING FORTUNES

Michael Collins offers a few thoughts on this matter.

The Winter edition of BING brought the usual quota of interesting articles though it was the letters' page which particularly caught my attention with offerings from, among others, the always insightful Stan White and Ken Merry. If I single out Jay Lineberry's letter for special mention, it is because it touched on a topic which has dominated discussions in recent times - Bing's fading appeal - and not least because I happen to agree with his postscript: "I think Crosby's popularity has declined (although he is obviously still popular) because the public's taste has declined." I may have substituted the more neutral term "changed" for "declined", but it amounts to much the same thing in the end.

For younger readers, and fortunately they are a growing number, the insert on P. 38, *Bing Bling*, admirably describes the extent of Der Bingle's erstwhile fame. All the more surprising, therefore, is his rapid fall from those dizzy heights. Many reasons have been advanced to explain this. Four or five years ago, it was customary in Crosby circles to lay the blame on the fact that Bing, for all his achievements, was wedded to an outdated technology. The argument is not without merit. At the same time, it leaves many questions unanswered. True, Bing was the only movie star to rank No. 1 at the box-office for five years running, a record which held for most of the century. Yet, his films (so the argument ran) were mostly made in black and white except for a few such as *Blue Skies*, *White Christmas* and *High Society* together with some later ones which are, perhaps, best forgotten. Let us now apply that line of reasoning to Fred Astaire whose standing has remained undiminished for the past eighty years. While his later efforts with stars such as Cyd Charisse and Audrey Hepburn cannot be lightly dismissed, it is really those classic musicals from the mid-thirties, made with Ginger

Rogers, which define him as an artist.

Again, if one has to employ that much overused term "icon", it is hard to think of any movie star whose iconic status has been so well established in recent years as Humphrey Bogart. While some of his later films such as *The African Queen* and *The Caine Mutiny* are also far from negligible, it is for his brilliant portrayal of the Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett private eyes that Bogie will always be remembered. This is by no means to overlook the inimitable *Casablanca* from the same period, a film which just about tops everyone's list of all time greats. It marks that rare achievement of being both a critical and popular success. The plaudits are too numerous to mention, but I have yet to hear anyone remark: "What a marvellous film, a pity it was never shot in colour!" Try to imagine a similar comment being made about Carol Reed's post-war thriller, *The Third Man*, which was voted by the British Film Institute as the greatest British film of all time. Cinematographer, Robert Krasker, was no doubt restricted by the technology of his time, nevertheless his low angled shots of war-torn Vienna with its rain washed cobblestones conveyed the brooding menace of that period as well as the characteristic seediness of Greene's imaginative world more effectively than any modern, digitised, state-of-the-art equipment could ever have done.

Admittedly, the 'technology argument' carries greater weight when applied to Bing's sound recordings, but even here things are far from plain sailing. Older lags will recall the controversy, which raged in the pages of BING throughout the seventies and on into the eighties, surrounding Crosby's later albums. The new orchestrations and arrangements were often condemned as loud, intrusive, ostentatious and self-regarding. Some of them, indeed, had Bing fighting for his very life. Paul Smith was the conductor most frequently singled out, which may have been a little unfair since 'A Southern Memoir' was in many respects one of the better albums of that era. There were other culprits. Even greater anger was expressed towards the Buddy Bregman sessions from twenty years previously when Bing's voice was still in good shape. Crosby followers, much better qualified than I to pass judgement, argued very persuasively in these very pages that Bing was, all things considered, best served by the old mono recordings where his voice was firmly to the fore, unencumbered by tricksy orchestrations which pushed him off into the margins. This view was unlikely to cut much ice with a certain segment of the younger audience who have been conditioned to tolerate, even expect, a far higher decibel level in their music. At the same time, one seriously questions as to what percentage of this latter group would even contemplate watching *Casablanca* unless it were remade in full wide-screen colour and with Dolby Surround Sound.

Incidentally, I note with interest that Buddy Bregman appears to have been reinstated within the Crosby fold in recent years. It seems ages since I have come across an unkind word written about him, and this itself brings us to the heart of the matter, to that mysterious phenomenon sometimes referred to by sociologists as "attitude change." The controversial accompaniments of Smith and Bregman are now on record, in every sense of that phrase. They remain a constant, forever immutable. It is the attitudes of the listeners which are subject to change. And change they will, make no mistake about it.

If my earlier reflections came across as too single-mindedly Luddite in their rejection of the new technology, I should now qualify my position by acknowledging the growing influence of television and the cinema on our reading habits. The point was forcibly brought home to me in a recent chance encounter on the beach with an attractive nineteen year old named Lauren who happened to be reading C. S. Lewis, of all people. She was amazed when I told her that a close friend of mine was once tutored by Lewis at Magdalen College, Oxford. More than amazed, she was positively astounded when I then informed her that I had met his friend, Tolkien, and even had a signed copy of his famous trilogy.

What struck me about that strange encounter was just how mythical and godlike a figure Tolkien (who. unlike Lewis, was a boring lecturer) has become for the young. Lauren is at the upper end of the latest generation of Tolkien fans and, although she came to him by a more circuitous route, it is highly probable that most of her friends and contemporaries would only have known him through the recent spate of films. These artifacts, one hopes, will lead some of them back to the books themselves.

It is not quite so easy to imagine it happening, but I suppose it is entirely possible that some invention, still unheard of and well in the future, will put Crosby in touch with an entirely new audience. His "posthumous" appearances with singers like Clay Aiken give ground for hope. Also encouraging is the growing number of young people who have joined our ranks in recent years, among them the very talented Crissi Newton from Louisiana who has been running a Crosby website ever since she emerged from the cradle.

Michael Collins

(Editor: Michael is a superb writer and his article went on to draw several literary parallels to illustrate the effect of 'fashion' but sadly pressure of space meant that these had to be omitted.

Incidentally, Crissi Newton has had to endure a major operation in recent months and we trust that by the time she reads this, she will have made a good recovery.)

Frank Sinatra Jr. talks of Bing

As we know from the Gonzaga dinner in 2003, Frank Sinatra Jr. always has a good word for Bing. David Hendrickson met him recently.

In the 1940's they were portrayed as rival crooners. Warner Brothers even had them battling in cartoon form. Crosby versus Sinatra. Der Bingle against the kid from Hoboken. All these years later the two legendary figures are still the topic of many "who do you think was the greatest" conversation. However you may find it interesting to know that when I spoke with Frank Sinatra Jr for a radio interview, the conversation drifted to none other than Bing Crosby.

I spoke with Frank in November of 2004 while he was relaxing on a Saturday afternoon before taking the stage that night at the Mohegan Sun Casino in Connecticut. The younger Sinatra is currently performing his critically acclaimed show "Sinatra sings Sinatra". I asked first about life on the road and his response reminded me that he's been a performer for quite a long time himself. "Life on the road has not changed very much in the almost 43 years I've been doing it."

As we dug a little deeper the interview surprisingly turned to Bing Crosby. Sinatra was quick to point out that when his father was a young man, just starting out in the 1930's when he was barely out of his teens, his idol was Harry Lillis Crosby.

"I dare say that any kid who had a notion of being a singer at that point in time would have felt exactly the same. Bing Crosby was the number one, quintessential singer in show business at that time. He was "Der Bingle", he was "The Old Groaner". He was popular in so many levels. He was in movies with everyone from Jennifer Jones to Grace Kelly to W.C. Fields." He then described the early meetings of Crosby and his father during the war years. "When they were entertaining the troops during World War 2 they bit some dirt together."

Hardly rivals, they became friends according to Frank Jr.

Sinatra then jumped ahead to the 1950's.

"Years later, a very fine producer, who I once met when I was boy, a man named Sol C. Siegel a staff producer at MGM, had the idea of putting the two together. MGM owned a property that had been made in the 30's, called *The Philadelphia Story* starring Jimmy Stewart and Katherine Hepburn. Sol Siegel loved this property and said wouldn't it be fun to remake *The Philadelphia Story* and have one our better songwriters write a whole music score around it and make it a musical. He approached Cole Porter, Cole Porter agreed and it became *High Society*. I remember when they were recording the music for the picture, they hadn't even begun filming yet, they recorded the music when I was at Thanksgiving vacation in 1955. I remember it was November of '55 they recorded. Everybody in the industry was talking about it. My God, Sinatra and Crosby are gonna be in the same movie. And for that reason Metro Goldwyn Mayer locked everybody out of the filming. They wanted to keep the surprise going. I can remember, the date sticks in my mind even now, August 1st 1956. That was the night of the premiere in Hollywood and everybody was there. The typical thing with the limousines and the orbiting spotlights over head. Everyone in the audience knew at some point in the film there would come a time when the two men would do something together. Which had never been done. And it worked so phenomenally when they did "Didja Ever" that in the theater people applauded like it was a live stage play !! That was a wonderful, wonderful experience and I can remember the impact of it, even when I saw the premiere and I was 12 at the time."

We concluded our conversation about Bing Crosby with Frank Jr discussing the many different influences that helped his father develop his own style. "There's no question about it, that Bing was a terrific influence upon him, but then again he was listening to other people like Billie Holiday, Mabel Mercer and many others. He said to me once he put them all together and came out sounding like nobody."

After we finished the interview and said our goodbyes, it really struck me how much that Frank Sinatra Jr respects not only the history of his father's amazing career, but how much he cherishes the music and the impact that Bing Crosby had in his Dad's life.

Frank Sinatra Jr. is still on the road and I sense he likes it that way. Singing the music he loves and telling the stories that he lived during a truly golden age of American music.

David Hendrickson

(Editor: David Hendrickson is the programmer and morning show host on 1420am The Breeze (WJUB) in Plymouth, Wisconsin, which is about 50 miles north of Milwaukee.

Interesting to read that Frank Jr. is adamant about the date when Bing and Frank Sinatra recorded "Well, Did You Evah!" as it differs from our own records. Perhaps the date we have of January 17, 1956 was when the scene was filmed with Bing and Frank lip-synching to the playback?)

A Renaissance in Bloom

Martin McQuade describes a Crosby awakening in New York.

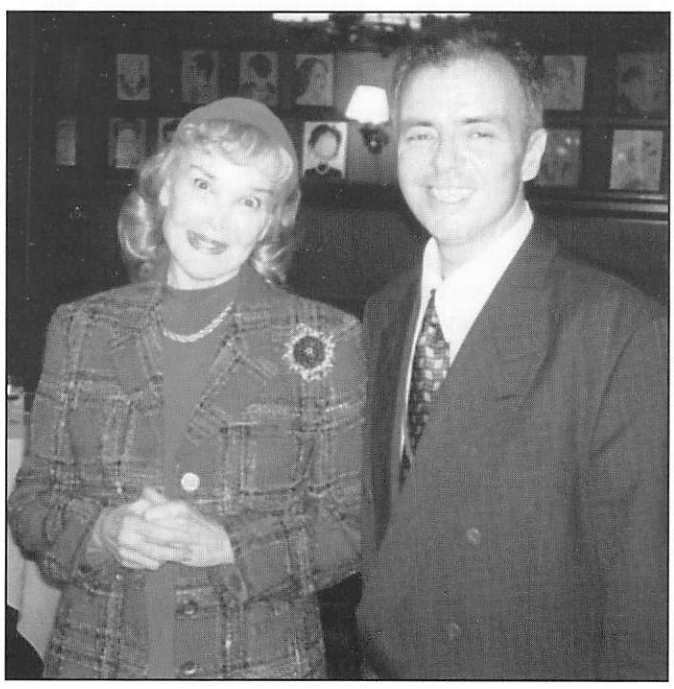
"Autumn in New York, why does it seem so exciting?" The answer to that question, posed in the Vernon Duke song, was abundantly evident this fall. There was a number of major occasions in our city where the art of Bing Crosby received the appreciation it so richly deserves. Chief among these was a most ambitious overview entitled "Celebrating the Crosbys" hosted by the Donnell branch of the New York Public Library. Donnell is renowned for its media center and is a haunt for film and music scholars. Early in 2004, I recommended to Joseph Yranski, senior film and video historian at the library, that Donnell would be an excellent venue for a Bing Crosby tribute. I aroused his interest when I said that perhaps I could persuade Kathryn Crosby to perform her one-woman show in the Donnell auditorium. I further suggested that her performance could be augmented by screenings of select movies and TV shows. He was receptive to my idea, and we made an appointment to meet the next time Mrs. Crosby came to town, contingent on her approval, which was soon granted.

Mrs. Crosby and I met with Mr. Yranski in early May. We were shown the auditorium, and upon seeing the spacious state-of-the-art theater, she immediately agreed to perform there. She also gave her blessing to a series of screenings, to be culled both from the library's own archive and outside sources.

In August, I was asked by Mr. Yranski to come to his office at Donnell to assist in preparations and logistics for the series. I was commissioned to provide from my archive a collection of photos for display which would delineate peaks from Bing's career. Mr. Yranski

underwent the painstaking process of carefully balancing the schedule, notifying the press, and lining up guest contributors. By September the stage was set for the most far-reaching Crosby retrospective that New York City had yet seen.

As the fall progressed, there was keen anticipation in the air for the inauguration of the celebration, which took place on Saturday, November 20th at 2:30 p.m. with a performance of "Kathryn Crosby Remembers Bing." The 300 seat theater was filled to capacity and the audience included Joe Franklin, Bill Harbach, Steve Ross, Gary Giddins, Will Friedwald, and Harry and Mihaela Crosby, with their 3 month old blessed event, Nicholas. I had the distinct honor to introduce Mrs. Crosby, who, tres chic in an Oleg Cassini ensemble, sang several of her husband's evergreens. In addition, she sang some other favorites, most memorably, 'Yesterdays' and 'Yours', both in Spanish and English. She was accompanied by David Gross, a marvelous pianist whose coaching has added a rich burnish to Mr. Crosby's lilting voice. I know from my own experiences with Mr. Gross just how supportive his understated arrangements can be. The show was peppered with reminiscences, TV clips and slides of photos from Mrs. Crosby's latest book, "My Last Years with Bing." Throughout the presentation, the audience felt compelled to sing along, most robustly on her finale, "White Christmas." A standing ovation and an en masse rendering of "Happy Birthday" visibly overwhelmed her. After a successful book signing in the lobby, invited guests repaired to a reception, compliments of Mrs. Crosby, at nearby Sardi's restaurant, the venerable haunt for Broadway luminaries. Unfortunately, Mr. Gross could not attend since he had to rush to Atlantic City to conduct the orchestra that evening for Regis Philbin. (I had extended an invitation to Mr. Philbin, but he called me earlier in the week to tender his regrets.) Judy Schmid gives further details about the Sardi's event elsewhere in this issue.



Kathryn and Martin at Sardi's

Due to an overwhelming demand, Mrs. Crosby encored her show at Donnell on November 23rd, leading the way for the inception of the screenings, which would occur on every Wednesday and Thursday throughout December. The first program consisted of sterling color prints of two TV shows: "The Parkinson Show" (8/30/75) and "The Bing Crosby Show for Clairol" (12/24/62). The next two items on the Donnell calendar were Universal companion pieces, the rarely seen *East Side of Heaven* and *If I Had My Way*. Bing's movie career was further explored during the series with screenings of *Out of this World*, *Duffy's Tavern* and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*.

A highlight of "Celebrating the Crosbys" was a series of programs called "Meet the Maker" which showcased guest speakers. Yours truly had the privilege to launch this special feature with a two-hour compilation of clips tracing Bing's illustrious television career. After a brief spoken introduction limning the scope of my subject, I proceeded to screen my cavalcade of excerpts from a variety of Crosby specials, TV movies, guest appearances and, of course, scenes from "The Hollywood Palace," "The American Sportsman" and the sit-com series. I was immeasurably esteemed by the presence in the audience of Mrs. Crosby. This would be the only event of the series her schedule would allow her to attend. There was a question and answer session after my presentation. An amusing exchange occurred when someone inquired about the emblems on the various jackets which Bing wore in several of the clips. I turned the matter over to Mrs. Crosby.

"They were escutcheons from favorite places, such as Las Cruces or San Francisco, or perhaps Gonzaga. Bing loved escutcheons. In fact, there were escutcheons on the escutcheons."

The next installment of "Meet the Maker" was a program of rare shorts, clips and out-takes from the collection of the archivist and film restorer, Bob DeFlores. His opening remarks concerned the rigors of locating and repairing elusive film elements, and he tantalized us with his comments on searching for *Just an Echo*, the Holy Grail for Crosby film sleuths. Mr. DeFlores proceeded to screen examples of his rescued treasures, the majority of which have been available on the Festival Films label. A highlight of this potpourri of rarities was a 30 minute compilation of scenes from Bing's own home movies which were salvaged by a curiosity seeker from the fire that ravaged the Crosby mansion in Toluca Lake in 1943. Mr. DeFlores described his diligent detective work which resulted in the locating and preserving of a remarkable glimpse into Bing's private life, circa the late 1930's. This priceless record revealed Bing and Dixie hosting a party for friends Edmund Lowe, Henry Fonda, Charles Ruggles, and Andy Devine. Bing the traveler was shown doing the hula with Hawaiian natives while in Hawaii prior to the filming of "Waikiki Wedding." We saw precious shots of a backyard birthday party for the twins. Most especially, Bing the sportsman extraordinaire was on view, playing tennis, and roughing it up on a boat scattered with fish, struggling with awesome strength to reel in a rather sizable creature. I had never before witnessed Bing's athletic prowess to this degree.

Mr. DeFlores returned the next day with Kitty Carlisle Hart (now aged 94), who was present to introduce Mr. DeFlores' restored print of *Here Is My Heart*. Mrs. Hart surprised the audience with her remarks concerning Bing's behavior towards her. I was startled to hear her call Bing "peculiar." She explained, "By the time I made *Here Is My Heart* with Mr. Crosby, I had already made one other movie with him. He was a huge star with jurisdiction over whom his leading lady would be. Apparently, he approved of me, but you wouldn't know it by his demeanor. He was very distant off the set. Many years later, when he was performing in New York with his family, I attempted to visit with him after the show. I knocked on his dressing room door, he politely greeted me, but would not invite me in. Now, Come on! That just isn't done in our business." Nevertheless, Mrs. Hart declared, "He had the most glorious voice. His gift for singing was supreme, far greater than anyone, much better than Sinatra. And he would indulge in all the taboos before performing. He would drink milk and eat chocolate. You aren't supposed to do that. But it didn't matter with Bing. That beautiful sound just poured out of him."

Kitty Carlise with Bing in Here Is My Heart

Mr. DeFlores announced that, due to a previous commitment, Mrs. Hart could not remain for the main feature, which was preceded by the 1933 short, *Please*. With this in mind, she kindly answered some questions prior to the screenings. Someone asked whether she thought Bing could have succeeded as an opera singer. "Yes, he certainly had the range. He could have excelled if he had trained for the opera." I later learned that once *Here Is My Heart* commenced, Mrs. Hart could not pull herself away, and arrived quite late for her next appointment.

The final installment of the "Meet the Maker" programs spotlighted James Sheldon, the director of "The Bing Crosby Show." Two choice episodes were shown: "The Image" and "Moonlighting Becomes You." Immediately after the screening, Mr. Sheldon made some remarks. First, he took exception to Mrs. Hart's portrait of Bing as aloof. "Well, we got along fine," he said. To illustrate his point, Mr. Sheldon read a letter he received from Bing after the series was cancelled.

"Your patience is inexhaustible. I can't recall anytime on the set when you ever exhibited any sign of a failing spirit, blowing up or taking a walk. And you had many situations where such behavior would have been justified. Tremendous control, old boy. I had a great time just because of the fact that you were at the helm and in spite of my bursitis. I do hope that we can get together sometime and any one of the projects we discussed should be a definite possibility."

Mr. Sheldon went on to cite one of those prospects, a film musical based on Robert E. Sherwood's play, "Idiot's Delight," envisioned as a vehicle to reunite Bing with Ingrid Bergman. Unfortunately, copyright entanglements intervened. Mr. Sheldon continued to read from the letter.

"As far as the series is concerned, I don't think we made a single episode we have to be ashamed of or worried about. I just got into that type of thing 5 or 6 years late. With all this semi-pornographic type of thing that audiences are viewing nowadays, it's not conceivable they're going to have much of an appetite for our gentle, casual stories. The way the trend is going, it's conceivable that Norman Mailer and Tennessee Williams and fellas of that stamp will soon be doing all the writing. Well, in any case, we closed on a high point, didn't we? I hope to see you, Jimmy, here in New York or on the coast."

Mr. Sheldon recounted an amusing anecdote. "Bing came over to me one day on the set and he said, 'We're behind schedule.' I said 'Why do you say that, Bing?' He said, 'Well, you smoke a lot, and when you do, I know we're behind schedule.' I never smoked again, and that was 40 years ago. For that, I thank Bing." Mr. Sheldon called Bing the epitome of grace and professionalism. After this most informative presentation, I asked Mr. Sheldon if he would grant an interview for this publication. He kindly consented, and we planned to meet in the spring.

This memorable matinee was rounded out with a screening of an episode of "Bob Hope's Chrysler Theater" from 1963. Entitled "The House Next Door," it stars Bob Hope and Mrs. Crosby as a married couple beleaguered by mobsters. This amusing item was generously loaned to Donnell by the Hope office. It has a surprising moment at the very end which immensely amused the audience. After many trials and tribulations, the twosome is about to move away from their house of torment. They see, much to their astonishment, that the new tenant moving in is none other than an exceedingly dapper Bing!

In addition to endlessly pleasing the legions of devotees who religiously sojourned to Donnell throughout the course of the series, "Celebrating the Crosbys" won many converts to the art of Bing. After each event, many people, young and old, approached me to express their amazement and exhilaration regarding the breadth of his talent. The Donnell survey fostered an awareness of Bing's accomplishments that is bound to spread. I hope that it proves to be a forerunner of more far reaching tributes to come. It is so gratifying for me that an idea which I initiated resulted in this most

rewarding enterprise which focused such a strong and positive spotlight on Bing. There were other recent events with which I was associated that also achieved this goal.

Kathryn at work elsewhere

Shortly before work began in earnest for the survey, I suggested to Mrs. Crosby that she participate in the annual running at Del Mar Race Track of the Bing Crosby Breeders' Cup Handicap on July 25th. She acquiesced to the idea. This was the first year that the event would be televised, being elevated to the status of a $250,000 stakes race. This would also be the first time that Mrs. Crosby would attend Del Mar. I coordinated details with the media relations department of the racetrack and our efforts resulted in a memorable outing at which Mrs. Crosby awarded the trophy to the owner of the winning thoroughbred. Del Mar hopes that Mrs. Crosby's appearance will become a yearly fixture of the race.

While plans for Donnell were in full swing, I arranged for Mrs. Crosby to participate in a military tribute to Bing to be held at the 175 years-old Fort Hamilton Army Garrison, overlooking the Narrows in Brooklyn. I worked with the top brass of the fort and the local chapter of ex-POWs to orchestrate this wonderfully emotional evening of entertainment which occurred on Monday, November 22nd. I introduced the testimonial with a brief overview of Bing's contribution to the Armed Forces. Mrs. Crosby reprised her one-woman show, which was followed by a screening from my collection of the 1978 CBS special, "Bing Crosby: The Christmas Years." The audience was comprised of many WW2 veterans and it was exceptionally evident from the outpouring of affection that the theater had become a wellspring of memories of a time when Bing's name was preeminent.

Once the presentation was over, Mrs. Crosby and I were awarded special achievement citations for this reminder of the awesome appeal of Bing. This event also resulted in our being invited to the Annual Armed Forces Gala and Gold Medal Dinner, sponsored by the USO of Metropolitan New York. This black tie event, at which General Richard B. Meyers, the Chairman of the US Joint Chief of Staff was honored, was held on December 8th in the grand ballroom of the Plaza Hotel. Upon arrival, Mrs. Crosby consented to be videotaped for a USO project committed to sending messages from home to our troops in Iraq. The high regard in which the Crosby name is held by the military was on display throughout the evening.

This busy season in town was not without TV and radio exposure for Bing. Greg Van Beek has already given details of the PBS show entitled "Christmas at the Hollywood Palace." This compilation show enjoyed the benefit of filmed interviews with Mrs. Crosby and her children, along with producer Bill Harbach. The show was scheduled to be broadcast on Channel 13, the network's flagship station in New York, as part of its annual membership drive. I contacted officials at the station to determine their interest in Mrs. Crosby and Mr. Harbach appearing live in-studio during the pledge breaks. All parties favored the proposal. On the evening of Monday, December 6th, I watched from the green room as Mrs. Crosby and Mr. Harbach shared their memories during several intermissions. Mrs. Crosby was interviewed by Steve Adubato. She recalled a note that Henry Mancini sent Bing lauding his taste after seeing him sing with Harry on a Palace show. Mr. Adubato observed that Bing seemed to have no reservations about performing with his spouse. Mrs. Crosby countered, "At Christmas he was supposed to have his wife there. And since I was the only one at the time who could fill that role, he had to have me." Mr. Adubato asked Mrs. Crosby about Bing's inability to read music. "Well, he had a quick ear," she said, recalling the demonstration discs which would regularly arrive at their home in order for Bing to assimilate his songs. At one point, Mr. Adubato asked her to solicit contributions for the station. She gladly obliged, and remembered a time when she and Bing were given a large recreational vehicle by Minute Maid, which they in turn donated to KQED, the San Francisco PBS affiliate.

Bill Harbach (right) with Kathryn and Martin.

Mr. Harbach was interviewed by Denise Richardson in another part of the studio, but the distance separating the two did not daunt them talking to each other, overriding the interviewers. When asked whether Bing and Perry Como were friends, Mr. Harbach felt no hesitation relaying the query to Mrs. Crosby. She noted the occasion when she and Bing stayed at Mr. Como's residence in Jupiter, Florida. She also referred to the time when Bing drove Mr. Como from the airport when he arrived in California to tape Bing's show. Mr. Harbach consistently hearkened to the glamour and style of the Palaces, calling them treasures from "a civilization gone with the wind." He continued, "I would have paid to do these shows. You just couldn't do them today. There are no stars of that league." He described the Palaces as fun shows with no pressure, saying they were "pure gold with so many laughs." He likened the casts and crews to "a giant family" and called Mrs.

Crosby "a strong lady." During the last segment, Mrs. Crosby and Mr. Harbach appeared at the same table where their mutual admiration and fondness for each other was most palpable. Mr. Harbach hinted that there may be more Palace tribute shows in the offing. After the taping, he agreed to give me an interview for the ICC. Mrs. Crosby offered copies of her book as gifts to the many Con Ed volunteers working the phone banks. I was told afterwards that this fundraising evening was the most lucrative of the entire drive.

Mrs. Crosby appeared live the next morning on "The Tony Danza Show" on ABC. Knowing Mr. Danza's affinity for classic pop music, I had approached his producer in order to book Mrs. Crosby for the program. I soon got an ardent thumbs up. Mr. Danza was thrilled at the prospect of having Mrs. Crosby as his guest. Mr. Danza began Mrs. Crosby's segment by mentioning that Tony Bennett was a recent visitor to his show. "I asked him who his inspirations were and he immediately said, 'Bing Crosby.'" Mr. Danza recalled childhood memories of listening to Bing's records and of debates that raged at the dinner table regarding who was the best, Crosby or Sinatra. Mr. Danza went on, "He really was the beginning of that type of singing. Am I right?" Mrs. Crosby concurred, citing his pioneering use of the microphone. When asked if Bing had ever taken a singing lesson, Mrs. Crosby responded, "He didn't have to. He sang every day and he was Irish with a thick chest so he had lots of air in there." She continued, "He always modulated his voice so that he didn't upstage the guest. He always presented the guests quite nicely, even when it was Nathaniel, age 2."

Tony Danza with Mrs. Crosby

Mrs. Crosby provoked laughter when, in answer to Mr. Danza's question about how she met Bing, she replied, "I met him at Paramount. I was 19, a starlet, and he was your ordinary run of the mill superstar." Mr. Danza commented on how "cool and smooth" Bing was. While browsing through Mrs. Crosby's latest book, he speculated that "Bing and Bob Hope must be in heaven doing Road pictures." Mr. Danza concluded by asking Mrs. Crosby how she feels hearing "White Christmas." She remarked, "The only time it ever got to me was when I was doing 'The Seagull' in Russian in Siberia and they played Bing's record of 'White Christmas.' I hadn't heard it for a few years and I cried, and so did they. And they had not been exposed to his voice during the Cold War." Following the telecast, Mrs. Crosby encountered Anjelica Huston, who was about to pre-record a segment for Mr. Danza's show. They reminisced about the visit the Crosbys made to the home of her father, John Huston, in Ireland. Afterwards, Mrs. Crosby confided to me how pleased she was with the interview.

In addition to the TV appearances, I managed to book Mrs. Crosby, along with myself, for a full hour on the November 25th broadcast of Joey Reynolds' WOR-AM late night radio talk show. Mr. Reynolds asked Mrs. Crosby what attracted her to Bing. She mentioned his speaking voice and his comfortableness, and she emphasized his devotion to and respect for his mother. "To me that was a very good recommendation." Mr. Reynolds played Mrs. Crosby's and Bing's duet, "My Cup Runneth Over", a song introduced in the Broadway show "I Do, I Do." Mrs. Crosby recalled that the composers of that show wanted Bing and her to appear in the London production. Mrs. Crosby urged Bing, but he demurred, saying, "It's so much work. Why don't you do it as a single and call it 'I Do.'"

Mr. Reynolds remarked on "the controversy with the kids." Mrs. Crosby reacted calmly. "There was no controversy. They were grown-ups when Bing and I married and they were always very respectful to me and to Bing. They were very dear. Actually, it worked out pretty well because they got married shortly after Bing and I got married. We had picnics every Sunday in the yard after mass and we had the little children tumbling around the back yard. It was a lovely time together." We were joined by a very special call-in guest unbeknownst to us: Les Paul. He described his friend as "a god, so far above any other star." He spoke of Bing's plane phobia, Bing's admiration for Chet Atkins, and his reaction to the news of Bing's death. "I went to my room and bawled like a baby." I reminded Mr. Paul of a memorable flubbed performance of "Time After Time" from "Philco Radio Time" on which, Bing, unlike Mr. Paul, is so awfully unrehearsed that it seems practiced. Mr. Paul told us that Bing bet him that he would be unable to play the song properly on the guitar during the taping. Mr. Paul was 5 dollars richer when it was over. I raised the subject of Mrs. Crosby's efforts on behalf of the Trigeminal Neuralgia association, for which she serves as national spokeswoman. She informed the listeners about this most painful disorder and about the group's commitment to cure and relieve it. (At the time of this writing, Steven Lewis of the Crosby Internet Museum has promised to feature this broadcast on his website.)

These past several months have been an exceptionally rewarding and promising time for Bing crusaders and enthusiasts. The Donnell Library series created a climate for a flourishing reawakening to the Crosby legacy, making this autumn in New York an auspicious one for our cause. All of the salutary activities recounted here, as well as several retrospectives in the works, embolden me to echo an

observation that many have made. An eclipse has passed and, at long last, a significant Crosby renaissance is about to bloom.

Martin McQuade

Sardi's

As Martin has just described, Kathryn Crosby kicked off the six-week long special film series on her late husband, Bing, at the New York Public Library's Donnell Media Center on Saturday, November 20, 2004. The series, coordinated by the library staff and our own Martin McQuade, was a terrific opportunity for we "Truth Squad" members to continue to promote Bing's talents and good name to the general public.

Kathryn's performance piece in November was based on a show she's been fine tuning since her first meeting with many of us at Hofstra in November 2002 - and it's only gotten better - more songs, more sing-alongs, more stories, and more photos from her family's private archives. Pianist David Gross accompanied Kathryn and seemed to enjoy himself, especially during a short solo medley of Gershwin tunes.

Kathryn with member Tom Degan at Sardi's.
(Photo by Patti Dey)

After this inaugural event, Kathryn hosted a gathering of 40 fans and friends at Sardi's. A number of new friends contacted me in late summer to see if I could coordinate something for ourselves, and when I mentioned it to Kathryn, she said "why don't you organize something for me and invite these friends and we'll all have a friendly meal and get to know one another." Sure! So, 40 Bing-fans and Kathryn-friends gathered - many of the names familiar to the Bing-boards - along with other NYC-based friends of Kathryn (including Joe Franklin of NYC radio and TV fame) gathered, dined, snapped photos, and had a terrific time. Authors Will Friedwald and Gary Giddins were also in attendance - as was Ruth Prigozy of Hofstra University and Kathy Brown, administrator of the Rosemary Clooney website.

The food was delicious, the service excellent, and the conversations welcoming - Kathryn moved from table to table to visit with folks and afterwards said to me, "that was fun - we MUST do something like this again very soon!"

Thanks to Martin for his hard work with the NYPL and to Kathryn for being a generous hostess! Thanks, too, to all who cajoled me into organizing this event - I had a GREAT time in the Big Apple!

Judy Schmid

(Editor: I can only echo Judy's thanks to Martin for his hard work. He is certainly keeping Mrs. Crosby busy!

Bob DeFlores pops up all over the place and on February 18, he also presented his Bing package of rare clips to an audience at the Paramount Theatre, St. Cloud, Minnesota. Great job, Bob!)

Conversation With Ted

John Walton looks back to his own formative years.

Ted Harper's approval was tempered but clearly discernible. "It's the best he's done in years and definitely worth a listen." He looked as if he'd just handed me a birthday present. "You know why, don't you?" he added.

I knew Ted would answer the question himself.

"It's because he's free to choose his own songs and his own musicians," he said.

Ted and I, both seventeen, were in the classroom having one of our music discussions during the lunch break. The subject in question was the release of Bing Crosby's single "Ol' Man River" coupled with "In A Little Spanish Town". A respected Radio Luxembourg DJ had the previous evening spoken of Bing's 'resurgence' in recording these tracks.

As I said, however, Ted was only mildly impressed. The son of a musician who played in one of the many big bands that proliferated around the UK in 1955, he was generally acknowledged to be the sharpest knife in the drawer. He was the kind of student who, without appearing to try, came no lower than third or fourth in any subject while those who got ahead of him now and then were working flat out. So Ted's words carried weight, and, in the nature of schoolboy pecking orders, were augmented by the fact that he was about half a foot taller than me.

"He's no longer contracted to Decca," he continued, amiably. "He can record what he likes."

"But his records are released on Brunswick," I said.

Ted's manner changed. Clearly, this was another one of those occasions when I'd shocked him with my lack of retention. After a brief pause while he brought his incredulity under control and made himself desist from picking me up by the ears (a favourite reinforcement technique of his), he said with exaggerated patience: " I've told you before. Decca in America - Brunswick over here."

During the previous two years, in order to fill the yawning gaps in my musical experience, Ted had

generously favoured me with regular one-to-one tutorials on jazz and swing music. In particular, after learning of my incomprehensible view that Bing Crosby was the twentieth century's best popular singer, he had tried to counter it by introducing me to Mel Tormé, Buddy Greco, Ella Fitzgerald, and other carefully chosen artists. He referred to them as musicians' vocalists, the kind Ted senior and his professional colleagues would have gladly accompanied. Ted would draw attention to intonation, phrasing, jazz feel and choice of tempo. True, he proclaimed, Bing had many of the right attributes, but he was a disappointment. Although he'd been a leading light in the 1930s, he had since succumbed to Decca's need to cater for declining popular taste. Ted was scathing about most of Bing's million sellers during his later Decca years. During this time, he said Mr Crosby had recorded very little worth listening to.

"Ol' Man River", however, represented a dim light at the end of the tunnel. While not going as far as to say Bing would now rival the luminaries mentioned above, there was renewed hope for him. Working with the Buddy Cole Trio, he definitely had a chance to salvage his reputation. As afternoon school began, Ted's extra six inches and the fact that I was attached to my ears and preferred it that way, moved me to express my thanks that he had once again taken trouble with me. I hoped I wasn't a complete lost cause.

Almost fifty years later, I smiled when I noticed that the debate about Bing's later Decca years was still raging. Indeed it was this that brought to mind my conversation with Ted. With the benefit of hindsight I find it hard to understand why there are still those who believe that, at any point during his time with Decca, Bing's career stagnated. It's very clear now that not only did he extend the range of his work but succeeded also in maintaining his standards of excellence. The record-buying public, subjected to nowhere near the level of hype that permeates the pop music industry of today, placed the quality of the sound product well ahead of any consideration of image. They bought Bing's records in their millions and that, in those days, was surely the most reliable yardstick.

Yet in the 1950s it seems there were two important factors that influenced the change in popular music taste. The first, in the years following reconstruction after the Second World War, was the desire to take a new broom to all aspects of life. The importance of returning to pre-war standards had given way to a new feeling that we should now be looking ahead to better times. With this spirit upon us there were many ways in which we 'threw out the baby with the bathwater'. The enthusiasm with which the record-buying public - and not just the teenagers - embraced the rock revolution was one example. Bing was all but swept away in this tide.

The second factor, I believe, was represented in microcosm by the story I related above. Ted and many others identified so strongly with the music they liked to hear that they were intolerant of other 'adjacent' work and began to lobby against it. It's a pattern still to be seen today when we hear of young people actually coming to blows over the relative merits of, say, drum 'n' bass and r & b. A more alarming example, from my point of view, was the article by a prominent jazz vocalist who implied disappointment that others in the same field didn't improvise in performance, as he did. He named individual contemporary vocalists and, using his improvisational yardstick, made distinctions between them. I can only comment that in this way have Ella Fitzgerald, Nat 'King' Cole, Stacey Kent and Bing Crosby been excluded at various times from the classification jazz singer.

In the same narrow vein, many of the band musicians who proliferated in the 1950s were keen to demonstrate their musical discernment and to express their likes and dislikes in strong terms. Perhaps Ted's father was one of them. In spite of Bing's innovative work in the 1930s and his reputation as a brilliant improviser, they found it hard to forgive him for later 'novelty' and 'sentimental' songs. This work represented his demise in their eyes and led ultimately to the widely held delusion that Bing was no more than the 'old groaner' he allowed himself to be called. Unfortunately, this is a view still widely held today.

I only saw Ted once after we left school, but I must confess that Bing wasn't in my thoughts. I was preoccupied with the fact that, in a late spurt, I'd gained three inches on him. In 2005, however, I would dearly love to talk with him again about Bing; to ask him if he didn't agree that we'd both really been on the same side, and to hear his comments on the rest of Bing's work with Buddy Cole.

I would put to him that, in the light of the popular music that has filled our ears in the last few decades, perhaps we should have put up a better fight for our jazz-derived music, and valued the extended range that artists such as Bing Crosby could introduce. Would Ted have seen anything of himself (or Ted senior) in that jazz singer of today, beginning again to separate the true jazz artists from those who don't 'improvise'? Would I have persuaded him that, having seen how squabbling and fragmentation had helped plunge our kind of music into the doldrums for so long, we should now embrace the whole breadth of its mini-revival and not make the same mistakes again?

I would like to put all this to Ted, but I can't. A year or two after he won the BBC's national Brain Of Britain contest, proving he was actually the sharpest knife in the entire cutlery factory, I heard he'd died, at the age of 39, of muscular dystrophy.

I can't of course put words into his mouth, but I honestly think that today he would have been more forgiving of Bing's years with Decca. Sometimes, as I feel a slight frisson across my ear lobes, I want to believe he might even have approved of some of the output.

John Walton

Remembering Bing in New York, 1976

After Pat Forster's impressions of the Palladium concerts in our last issue, here's Jack Boyle with a look at Bing's performance at the Uris in New York.

It was such a special night for me: Friday, December 10, 1976. The Uris Theatre in New York City. A chance to see someone whose vocal artistry had influenced my musical taste more than anyone else during my growing-up years and still does today.

I had first heard his golden voice on the family radio in the late forties and early fifties. "Where the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day" signaled the start of his evening radio show. I remember imitating him while climbing the stairs to bed. On the way up to my room, there was a stairwell with acoustics hard to duplicate. I would sing "Now is the Hour" or some other Crosby song on that private stage. Later, my oldest brother, a big band aficionado, bought me a set of Crosby movie albums he had found in a store in Canada. There was Bing on the covers as a cowboy, a gypsy, a sailor. I treasured that gift, my very first record collection.

Then there would be television and the Hollywood Palace shows and Christmas specials, an occasional movie like *White Christmas*, *High Society* or *Say One for Me*, and when I could find them, a record or two from record stores which now featured mostly rock. Not that I didn't have my share of Rolling Stones, David Bowie and Beach Boys albums, but I was hooked on Bing. He was simply the best.

Suddenly it was 1976. I had seen a modest advertisement in The New York Times announcing his forthcoming appearance at the Uris Theatre. I remember thinking it should have been a full page ad. Sinatra's were always full pages. I figured Bing probably didn't need one but I was disappointed. But it didn't matter. I was not going to miss this once in lifetime opportunity. A glowing review by Clive Barnes enhanced my state of eager anticipation.

I will never forget the breathtaking excitement I felt when he first ambled, unannounced, to stage center. I savored every moment, wanting the evening to go on forever. Alone, elegantly attired in tux and tie, he said his "good evenings" to us all. He seemed to me a relatively slight figure, slender and almost vulnerable looking, with slightly stooped shoulders bent magically into a permanent stance. Relaxed? Yes. But serious too, as he sang and conversed about his 50 years as a performer. As he stood there I reflected. Imagine: Over 400 million records sold, more than 60 films, a voice instantly recognizable the world over, a true legend and somehow a good friend, a father figure really, who had so filled my young days with his magical voice, his children's stories on my Golden Records and that voice, with a timbre and tone that continues to thrill me to this day. And here he was, at an advanced age, carrying it off with elegance, self-assured class, and yet a good measure of self-deprecating modesty.

And he was so good! I remember wanting him to be good. It was the relaxed, confident, vibrant voice I had hoped to hear. And stronger, much stronger than I expected. He sang the old songs. I enjoyed these. The closing medley was an incredible feat because there were so many songs in his wonderful career that were part of our collective memories. But he also engaged new songs and made them distinctly his own. Songs like "Send in the Clowns." A friend who had joined me for the evening, much more inclined toward Grace Slick or Elton John, said he had never heard the song done better.

I had had discussions with friends about what makes a true performer. There are, it would seem, few entertainers who really give it their all in a concert hall, a club or showcase, especially in the days of "lip synching" and the like. With Bing, it was different. I believe for him it was a matter of integrity. He felt the love from his fans and he wanted to give back in full measure. That evening, except for a few brief interludes by the wonderful Rosemary Clooney, Joe Bushkin and an English comedian, Bing was up there, occasionally joined by his lovely wife, Kathryn, and his children, Harry, Mary and Nathaniel, singing for the better part of two and one-half hours.

When it was over, the lights were again dimmed and as suddenly as it had begun, Bing Crosby was alone with the orchestra, the audience and the night. He sang his sometime closing theme, "That's What Life is All About." It was a song about his successes, his occasional trials and his essential philosophy. As he finished, there was a standing ovation. I think many of us in the room felt this was a moment that would never be repeated but that would be forever etched in our memories.

Then the magic ended. A distinct hush fell over the Uris Theatre and the audience slowly filed out. Bing Crosby had not sung in a public performance like this in New York City for well over 40 years, not since the Paramount days. But he had come back. And we were oh so glad.

It is said that the following year, during his final evening performance at the Palladium in London, Bing had uncharacteristically whispered to his audience: "I love you." It was and continues to be an unmatched relationship existing between Bing and his fans, a connection that will probably never be repeated in show business in like measure.

Jack Boyle

BING ON THE BOX

Yes, I know, it's springtime and last year's Yuletide season is barely a memory. But the very nature of a tri-annual magazine means that it is always going to be retrospective. Thus, if you continue, you will be reading about the holy night, carolers, snow, bells that jingle-jangle-jingle and, of course, THAT song! But first, let's list the many Bing films which have been seen on both sides of the Atlantic since our last issue.

USA

THE BELLS OF ST. MARY'S	Turner Classic Movies
GOING MY WAY	Turner Classic Movies
HOLIDAY INN	Turner Classic Movies
LET'S MAKE LOVE	Fox Movie Channel
ROAD TO BALI	Turner Classic Movies
ROAD TO MOROCCO	Turner Classic Movies
ROAD TO UTOPIA	Turner Classic Movies
ROAD TO ZANZIBAR	Turner Classic Movies
ROBIN AND THE 7 HOODS	HBO Comedy / Cinemax
STAGECOACH	AMC
WHITE CHRISTMAS	WOR New York

UK

ANYTHING GOES (1956)
HERE COMES THE GROOM
HIGH SOCIETY
HOLIDAY INN
LET'S MAKE LOVE
MY FAVOURITE BLONDE
THE PALEFACE
ROAD TO BALI
ROAD TO SINGAPORE
ROAD TO MOROCCO
WHITE CHRISTMAS

For some reason the UK transmission of 'Morocco' was a slightly edited version. None of the songs were missing though.

THE STORY OF WHITE CHRISTMAS

In the UK, it was good to see and hear the clip from *Holiday Inn* commencing the special edition of *Top Of The Pops* at 2 p.m. on Christmas Day; and with the film of the same name being screened on BBC2 just ten minutes later it was a very good start to the post prandial period.

The song itself was the subject of a BBC Radio West Midlands *The Late Show* Yuletide broadcast on which our own Ken Crossland guested to explain the story of Irving Berlin's *White Christmas*. It is still top of the updated ASCAP list of popular Christmas songs and, as one would expect, Bing's version is responsible for a considerable contribution toward that popularity. However, no fewer than eighteen different performers have had chart entries with it in versions covering every aspect of the musical spectrum from Presley, through the Chipmunks and rap versions to the Three Tenors. Although it was stated that *Candle In The Wind* had eclipsed Bing's *White Christmas* sales the 2002 Guinness Book Of Records clearly states that Bing's record exceeds fifty million and more than 100 million if all formats are taken into consideration.

Ken explained how Bing's original May 1942 master wore out after pressing the previously unheard of five or six million copies resulting in the need for a second recording five years later. Whilst it is very similar Bing's voice is noticeably deeper and there are vocal inflections which identify either version within a few seconds.

In explaining to hosts Julie and Tony the reason for its popularity, Ken said that as a past master of the simple song with simple lyrics, Berlin wrote the song at a time when there was still a great longing in the American psyche for the days of the 19th Century and the days of the Founding Fathers. America was not a world dominant power and rather isolationist at that time still looking inwards and backwards. Some Americans would have barely heard of a white Christmas let alone seen one, and while the verse reflected the latter desire it was quickly dropped, rather against Berlin's wishes, as being irrelevant to the screenplay of the film *Holiday Inn*. The song was first heard, publicly, when Bing sang it on the Christmas Day 1941 broadcast of the Kraft Music Hall less than three weeks after the Pearl Harbor attack and was to become *the* wartime song, at least for American forces. An interesting variation to the norm was achieved by Ken featuring the extremely rare first Take of the original recording on which Bing fluffs the last line by the omission of the word 'your'. As Ken was to say, Bing would have been immediately off to the golf course after an otherwise perfect Take. Lucky for us that he had to cut it all over with Take -B, thus giving us collectors that first, intriguing and historical gem.

As an off topic footnote it is remarkable that of the husband and wife hosts, Julie Meyer and Tony Wadsworth, the good lady had never heard of 'Mel Toorm', as she called him, nor had any idea what an e.p. was. This gives us some idea of what we are up against in trying to preserve our kind of music and artistes! Be that as it may, we appreciate their having Ken on their show to bring a lot more substance to the most famous Christmas song, and biggest seller, ever!

On the subject of *White Christmas* (the film) please note the collage reproduced herewith. This is available in colour from Arthur Blood and please see Trading Post for details.

HOME THOUGHTS FROM THE BROADS

Okay, so Paul Barnes doesn't broadcast from those natural waterways but Norwich isn't too far down the road. Barnsey, at Gold For Grown Ups was the lucky, and delighted, recipient of a copy of the *Swingin' With Bing - The Lost Radio Performances* 3-cd set produced and mastered by our region's home dwelling local heroes Ken Barnes and Peter Reynolds and I believe I

am right in saying that Paul is the only presenter to have received a complimentary copy. Courtesy of Ernest Sutkowski via Stan White the box set of radio material made a huge impact on Paul whose enthusiastic verbosity knew no bounds: 'Spiffing!'; 'absolutely stunning'; 'leaps from the speakers it's so fresh'; 'irresistible' were among the plaudits he heaped upon this remarkable collection.

Initially, his wide ranging audience were treated to a mainly Christmas theme when Bing and Ella sang *Rudolph The Red-nosed Reindeer, Silver Bells* and *White Christmas*. Though perhaps by way of a 'thank you' to Stan White, he also featured Stan's favourite track from this collection, *'Istanbul'*, again with Ella, on which there is also a great trumpet solo from Ziggy Elman. For the February ICC calendar spot we had the featured song, as always. In this instance duetting with Olga San Juan on the soundtrack recording of *I'll See You In C.U.B.A.* and again from the Ken Barnes 3-cd set the superior Philco Radio Time version of *Blue Skies* featuring Les Paul on guitar. All those tracks being just a few of what could also have been heard on Paul's programme either 'live' or world-wide by logging on to www.bbc.co.uk/england/threecounties and following on-screen instructions. In view of the popularity of the *Swingin' With Bing* set among lucky owners who have bought it, it is surely about time it was released in Britain.

Incidentally, Paul's programme will be heard from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Saturdays from May 14 instead of the previous late-night Sunday spot.

PACKIN' THEM IN

As usual, Harmony Night from the hop fields county, aka 'The Garden Of England', continues to give its listeners just what they want to hear by way of requests. Unfortunately, for two of its three hours it has been clashing with Gold For Grown Ups on a Sunday night but this problem will disappear when Paul Barnes' show switches days. So if you are anywhere near the vicinity of BBC Radio Kent, then Mr. & Mrs. Rennells will be there to ease you into the small wee hours with a minimum of chat and a maximum of music at the rate of around sixteen tracks an hour! Lots of Bing in the Christmas run-up with the 1942 original best seller becoming more and more evident over and above its 1947 re-mastering. The little heard de Vol version of *The Secret Of Christmas* made it on the programme as did *I'll Be Home For Christmas*, among others. And regarding that latter song a new, to many of us, noteworthy item came to light on Russell Davies' Sunday afternoon programme when he related that the astronauts Lovell and Borman, on a return from a Gemini mission on the 21st December 1968, were asked what piece of music they would like to accompany their re-entry and they responded with Bing's version, please, of that all-time favourite Christmas song.

One other intriguing item that occurred just recently on Russell's programme was Dorothy Squires singing *My Kid's A Crooner*. Ms. Squires recorded this for a new album about eighteen months ago and Russell was surprised that it should have been included not having heard the song for many years. Well, we can satisfy his curiosity. ICC member Wally Oldfield is a fan of Dorothy Squires and follows her fortunes, meeting up with her backstage and so on, and on learning she was to cut a new album he discussed this track with her and she asked him to send her a copy of one of the 'Thirties 78s; and there were several versions. I was able to give Wally a taped copy of the Elsie Carlisle track for her to listen to and it went from there. On completion of the album she sent a complimentary copy of the CD to Wally which has pride of place among his other Dorothy Squires personalized memorabilia. It is more than likely that among our newer and younger members there will be those who are unaware that in 1935 composers Harris and Montgomery wrote this song with Bing very much in mind, hence the line: "I think I'll write Bing Crosby and ask him what to do, to stop my kid from crooning boo-boo-boo."

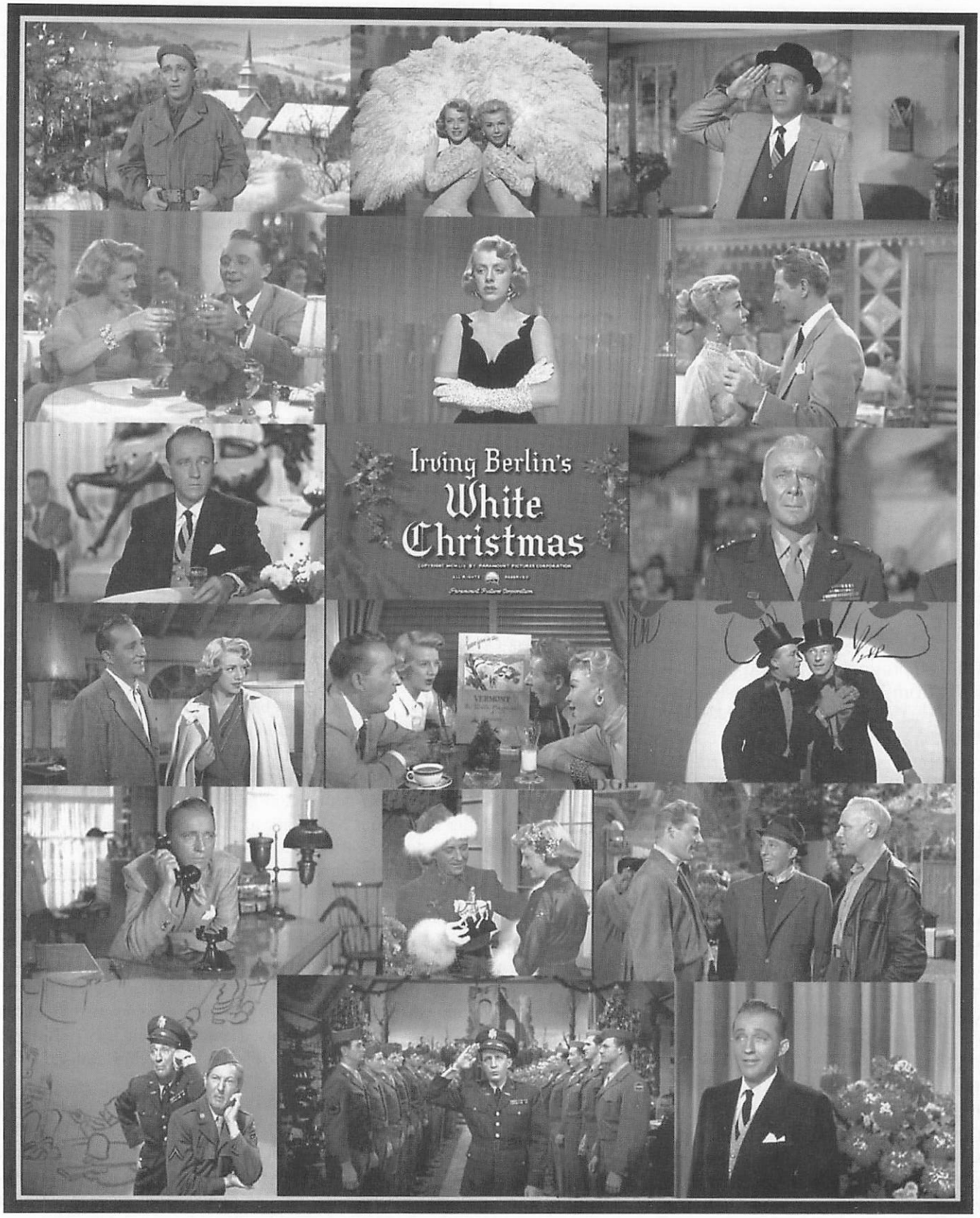
SUNDAY [THAT ONE DAY]

BBC Radio2 on Sunday afternoons is still quite a good place to be despite our loss of Desmond Carrington's long-time popular music slot. We still have Russell Davies, and from 1 p.m. to 2.30 p.m. Elaine Paige the erstwhile West End musical star. In a December broadcast she featured the story of and songs from *Holiday Inn* and *White Christmas*. 'Bing and Christmas go together don't they' she opined whilst confiding to her listeners that the latter film was, virtually, a re-make of the former. The only similarity really is that they both starred Bing, and had music by Irving Berlin including that great songwriter's most famous Christmas number. This 're-make' tag has, in the past, also been applied to *Holiday Inn* and *Blue Skies*, which is a little closer to the truth - the same two men, Astaire and Crosby, vying for the affections of one girl, with a nightclub background. Ms Paige featured *Snow*, *Happy Holiday* and *Count Your Blessings*. She also introduced some deliberate, out of season whimsicality by playing *Easter Parade*. That the Crosby films segment of her show concluded with The Carpenters version of *White Christmas* was no particular hardship. It can get a little bit overplayed and, in any case, she wanted to feature a version that included the rarely heard verse.

Standing in for Howard Leader - absent in Afghanistan for whatever reason - we have Maria Richmond on BBC Radio Lincolnshire. She's not green though when talking about Bing. With a mini-biography and selecting a representative track or two she is keeping that local station's listeners continually aware of the Crosby voice and legacy. *Be Honest With Me* is not heard too often but the popular stuff doesn't get overlooked either as spins of *Around The World* and *True Love* will testify.

More and more BBC wireless broadcasts are becoming available on the Internet. The latest we learn about is Mike Carey's regular Radio Derby programme 'Memorable Melodies' (Sundays, 4-6 p.m.) at www.bbc.co.uk/england/radioderby.

Though we miss Desmond Carrington's Sunday slot he can still be heard for an hour on Tuesday evenings at 7 p.m. with Music Go Round, and still playing some Bing, as you would expect. On a D.I.Y.



WHITE CHRISTMAS 1954

theme for one such occasion Bing must have been the number one contender for the Bruised Thumbnail Award with *The House Jack Built For Jill.* Joe Francis has been on stage in London for a few weeks and his *Easy To Remember* song from the album of the same name had an airing on Desmond's programme. Also to be mentioned is the appropriately named David Jacobs, a D.J. spanning the years back to Juke Box Jury, who doesn't overlook Mr. C. in his wide ranging collection of musical memories.

Rounding off the British scene; just a few items for the collectors of trivia. On the 2nd January Bing and Bob were mentioned in the dialogue of Agatha Christie's A MURDER IS ANNOUNCED; and *Straight Down The Middle* was played over a National News bulletin containing a golfing news item. In the episode of *Cold Case* shown on Sky 1 on January 20, the action was set in 1943 and we got to hear Bing and the Andrews Sisters singing *Don't Fence Me In.* All just to show we pay attention!

OVER THERE FROM OVER HERE

Looking at the American scene, our enthusiastic 32 year-old, Greg Van Beek has already described earlier in this issue how he pulled out all the stops through his involvement in the production and presentation of the first Bing Crosby Christmas Special for twenty-five years, "Christmas At The Hollywood Palace".

Greg also co-presented, as guest, Tom Shanahan's Club 60 programme located on FM 104.9 WTKM which hails from Hartford, Wisconsin. The 8.30 to 9.30 radio broadcast took in a lot of Crosby-at-Christmas territory with a mixture of commercial, KMH and TV recordings, notably *Winter Wonderland, Jingle Bells* (the air-shot that features a nice Skitch Henderson solo), the sketch where Bing enrobes as Santa despite Gary's protestations that he and his younger siblings have outgrown such paternal kidology; and from the small screen: *The Christmas Waltz.*

Greg was also involved with 'phone-ins to David Hendrickson's Show from The Breeze in Plymouth broadcasting on 1420 AM, and Good Day Milwaukee with Dan Willis & Gregory Jon on their WOKY AM 920 7.15 a.m. early morning slot. As can be seen, Greg had a very busy day with a lot of good promotion for Bing.

On December 15, Ted Nessi of Wheaton College Radio played the complete 1955 "Christmas Sing with Bing" on his radio show. He kindly provided an Internet link to the Bing Crosby Internet Museum bulletin board (http://wccs.wheatonma.edu/listen/) and maybe some visitors to the Museum took advantage of this news item at the time. But, in retrospect, we like to record that these events and facilities are out there for those with the time and inclination to exploit them.

Frank Brannigan of Dublin drew our attention to Bing's appearance on the VH1 music channel. The station showed a programme about the 20 all-time greatest Christmas songs. *White Christmas* came in at No. 8 and *The Little Drummer Boy/ Peace On Earth* track at No. 16. Not a Sinatra, Como or Martin in sight. The programme featured the two Crosby songs in scenes from *Holiday Inn* with Bing and Marjorie Reynolds at the piano and the Bing-Bowie duet from Merrie Olde Christmas. These excerpts were shown several times a day right up to Christmas Day.

MORE TRIVIA

From Jon Oye on the Museum

"I have to admit that I'm one of the small percentage of Americans that never cared much for *Cheers* so forgive me if this anecdote is already common knowledge among Bing fans. I happened to be watching a re-run of the show tonight when, towards the end, the fiancé of Cliff's elderly mother has died unexpectedly. She laments sullenly to her son, "I guess I'm just not the type of person that good things happen to." Cliff gently retorts, somewhat self-consciously, "Oh, I don't know, Ma . . . something pretty nice happened to you about thirty-seven years ago". She suddenly perks up and replies, "It sure did! How many women ever got to shake hands with Bing Crosby?"

Indeed!

Bert Bishop, February 2005

ONCE IN A WHILE

Personalities associated with Bing who have died since our last issue was prepared include:

Johnny Carson, host of NBC's *The Tonight Show* for nearly 30 years, died on January 23 of emphysema. Carson, a longtime smoker, was 79. He was host of the late-night talk show from October 1, 1962, to May 22, 1992, taking over from Jack Paar and handing off to Jay Leno after 4,531 episodes. Under Carson, *The Tonight Show* earned 42 Emmy nominations and won seven trophies. Carson picked up a Golden Globe nomination in 1975, three years after moving the show from New York to Hollywood. He interacted with Bing on several occasions. They both took part in the Ed Sullivan 14th anniversary show in 1962 and on January 27, 1970, Johnny was the compere of the Eisenhower Medical Centre benefit at the Waldorf Astoria when Bing and Bob Hope entertained so memorably. Both Bing and Johnny were honorary pallbearers at the funeral of Louis Armstrong in 1971. Bing appeared on *The Tonight Show* twice. The first time was on October 15, 1975 when Carson was absent and Don Rickles was his deputy. Then on March 5, 1976 Bing was Johnny's guest with Ray Bolger and Marvin Hamlisch.

Virginia Mayo the beautiful blonde who rose to movie stardom in the 1940s died in January. She was 84. A former vaudevillian who came under the wing of producer Samuel Goldwyn, Mayo launched her movie career with a small part in the 1943 movie *Jack London*, starring her future husband, Michael O'Shea .She also received billing as a Goldwyn Girl in *Up in Arms*, a 1944 comedy starring Danny Kaye and Dinah Shore. In the same year, Goldwyn promoted Mayo to leading lady, casting her as Princess Margaret in *The Princess and the Pirate*, an adventure comedy co-starring Bob Hope. This was her only link with Bing as he memorably appeared in the last reel to steal her away from Hope.

Bing steals Virginia Mayo away from Bob Hope

Over the next few years, she teamed up with Kaye in *The Kid From Brooklyn*, *A Song Is Born* and, most notably, *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*. Goldwyn cast Mayo against her image as the dream girl next door in *The Best Years of Our Lives (1946)* and she was widely praised for her first major dramatic role as the two-timing wife of a returning war veteran. Three years later, after moving to Warner Bros., Mayo gave one of her best-remembered performances, in *White Heat*, in which she played the unscrupulous wife of James Cagney, a mentally disturbed gang boss who alternately cuddles and slaps her.

During the 1940s and '50s, Mayo appeared in more than 40 films, including *The Girl From Jones Beach* with Ronald Reagan, *Captain Horatio Hornblower* with Gregory Peck, *The Silver Chalice* with Paul Newman, *The Flame and the Arrow* with Burt Lancaster, *Along the Great Divide* with Kirk Douglas and *Colorado Territory* with Joel McCrea. After her movie career faded in the early 1960s, Mayo acted in stage and dinner theater productions and made only occasional appearances in movies and on television.

Artie Shaw, the clarinetist and bandleader whose recording of "Begin the Beguine" epitomized the Big Band era, died on December 30 at the age of 94. He began his professional career while still in his teens, first playing saxophone, then switching to clarinet to take advantage of a job opportunity. By the time he was in his early 20s, he was a highly paid member of a CBS radio orchestra where he accompanied Bing on many occasions. After the first of his many retirements from the music business, he returned to New York and began assembling his first orchestra in 1936. "Begin the Beguine" and fame followed not long afterward. At his peak in the 1930s and '40s, Shaw pulled in a five-figure salary per week and ranked with Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey and Glenn Miller as the bandleaders who made music swing. But he left the music world largely behind in the mid-'50s and spent much of the second half of his life devoted to writing and other pursuits.

His band's recording of Cole Porter's "Begin the Beguine" was intended to be the "B" side of the record. Instead, it became a huge hit, topping the charts for six weeks in 1938 and making Shaw famous at age 28. Among his other hits, some with his big band and some with his quartet, the Grammercy Five: "Goodnight, Angel", "Frenesi," "Dancing in the Dark," "Nightmare," "Back Bay Shuffle," "Accent-tchu-ate the Positive," "Traffic Jam," "They Say," "Stardust," "Thanks for Ev'rything," and "My Little Nest of Heavenly Blue." He married eight times including actresses Lana Turner (wife No. 3, 1940), Ava Gardner (No. 5, 1945), Evelyn Keyes (No. 8, 1957) and novelist Kathleen Winsor, author of the 1944 best-seller "Forever Amber" (No. 6, 1946). He enlisted in the Navy during World War II and wound up spending most of his time leading a band, giving shows for the troops. Artie was part of the CBS Orchestra which backed Bing on his first radio shows in New York in 1931 and 1932. After that, there were rumours that Artie and his Band were going to take over from Jimmy Dorsey on the Kraft Music Hall but in fact he and Bing appeared to have worked together only once when Artie and his Grammercy Five guested on Bing's Kraft show on March 15, 1945.

Jerry Scoggins, who sang "The Ballad of Jed Clampett" that introduced the comical Clampett clan on "The Beverly Hillbillies," died in December at the age of 93. Scoggins, who was born in Texas and began his career there, was the lead singer of the Cass County Boys who worked with Bing in the early 50s. They accompanied Bing on three tracks, 'You Don't Know What Lonesome Is', 'Open Up Your Heart' and 'Y'All Come' as well as supporting him on a marvellous version of 'Across The Wide Missouri' on the Chesterfield Show of May 16, 1951. In 1936, Scoggins formed the Cass County Kids with John "Bert" Dodson and Fred Martin. Gene Autry changed the group's name to the Cass County Boys when he hired them in 1946 for his Melody Ranch radio program. They worked with Autry for 12 years on radio and television, and performed in 17 of his movies. The Cass County Boys were inducted into the Western Music Hall of Fame in 1996.

Sister Mary Francis Moore 1928 - 2005

Wig gives us some more sad news.

At the Hofstra University Conference in November 2002, I had the pleasure of chairing a panel featuring several of Bing's fans who described their relationships with him over the years. Among them was Sister Mary Francis Moore of New York. One of her delightful stories described how on some evenings she used to rewind the clock in the convent so that the Mother Superior would be "fooled" into letting the Sisters stay up late to watch Bing on television. Sister Mary Francis, a personal friend of Bing and ICC member, passed away earlier this year. A fellow club member, Al O'Hagan of Brooklyn, has written a moving tribute to her, which I know others will appreciate reading.

F. B. (Wig) Wiggins

I regret to inform you of the death of Sister Mary Francis, the ultimate fan and good friend of Bing Crosby. Many of you may remember Sister from her participation in the Hofstra University tribute to Bing. Those of us who knew Sister admired her ability to light up any room she entered. Her friendship with Bing, led

to warm relationships with the likes of Rosemary Clooney and Bob Hope, everyone was drawn to this petite, jovial, Sister of Mercy.

Our paths crossed some twenty-eight years ago when my son Shaun was in the 2nd grade at St. Bernard's School in Brooklyn. His teacher asked the class who their favorite entertainers were, the students choices varied over the latest rock groups but Shaun emphatically answered Bing Crosby. When questioned by the teacher, he explained, that's the only records my father ever plays in our house! The teacher sent my son to the Principal, Sr. Mary Francis, with instructions to tell her who his favorite singer was! Sister was amused and immediately placed him in the school pageant, teaming him up with three little girls to lip-sync a Crosby, Andrews Sisters record. The stage-bug bit and Shaun is now an actor in California.

When Bing was appearing at the Uris Theatre in New York City I purchased a block of tickets and suggested to my wife we invite Sr. Francis. However, she already had tickets. I first met Sister, personally, at that theatre and was surprised to find her in first-row-center. "Where did you ever get such great seats Sister", I inquired, "Oh" she replied, very sweetly "Bing left them for me at the box office." She and Bing were long-time pen pals and he'd call her when in the City sometimes inviting her to lunch, I was envious!

As the City-wide, Irish chairman for America's Bicentennial celebrations in 1976, I convinced Mayor Abe Beam to invite Bing to light the City's official Christmas Tree and sing "White Christmas" at City Hall. When he accepted I was thrilled beyond description. Being a fan since childhood, I would finally get to meet Bing Crosby in person. I invited Sister Francis to join my family and I as we set out for this encounter of a lifetime. Nervous when actually greeting Bing, I just blurted out, "I have a friend of yours with me Mr. Crosby!" "Who's that?" he asked casually, "Sister Mary Francis" I answered and his eyes lit up "the baseball player" he said with a big smile "Where is she?" He made his way over to her asking the Mayor for a private room where he and Sister could talk *baseball.* "Use my office, Bing," the Mayor answered as Bing and Sister both disappeared. I looked at my wife and asked, "Why did we invite her?"

When Bing died a year later. Sister and I were invited to do a memorial to him on Adrian Flannery's Radio Show here in New York City. Sister talked about Bing and I played his records, this show went over so well that Flannery asked us to do an annual Bing Crosby Christmas Special. One year Father Patrick Payton, the Rosary Priest, was our guest and Sister was elated as he explained how Bing, in the 1940's, helped him get all the Hollywood stars to take part in his, Father Payton's Rosary Hour, on radio. And, how Bing's friend, Grace Kelly, assumed this task after Bing's death. We closed the show playing "True Love."

In 1994, we dedicated the Great Irish Fair to Bing Crosby; this annual Coney Island event was the largest of its kind in the world, raising millions of dollars for Catholic Charities. Rich Conaty of WNEW Radio broadcast his show live from the fairgrounds and Sr. Mary Francis gave an absolutely stirring talk on Bing as she presented Mr. Conaty with a plaque recognizing his dedication to playing Bing's records on the radio.

Sister is no doubt in heaven — probably talking *baseball* with Bing. May she rest in peace!

Al O'Hagan, Brooklyn, NY

The Crosby Years

Gord Atkinson looks at Bing's most famous leading lady.

Dorothy Lamour, the sultry star who made the Polynesian sarong fashionable, will long be remembered as Bing Crosby and Bob Hope's leading lady in their popular *Road* comedies. To her co-workers, neighbours and relatives she was a warm, thoughtful lady who was devoted to her family and friends. She was in poor health for some time prior to her death in September, 1996, at her California home. She was 81.

In 1974 I visited her husband Bill at their long time residence in Toluca Lake. They were near neighbours of Bob and Dolores Hope. Bill made arrangements for me to meet with Dorothy who was on tour. She was appearing on the dinner club circuit in the Noel Coward comedy, *Fallen Angels*. It was several months later before we got together at a theatre on the other side of the continent, near Tampa, Florida. She was charming both on and off stage. Following her performance we met in her dressing room for a most interesting and pleasant interview.

In 1939 Dorothy was cast opposite Crosby and Hope in the first of their seven movies, *Road To Singapore*. She was determined to make a good impression. "I studied my script and made sure I had memorized every word. On the first day of shooting as I was standing between the two guys, they began ad libbing and I didn't hear one word from the script. Back and forth went the wisecracks and one-liners and I finally said, while the cameras were rolling, 'Come on fellas! Let me get my line in, please'. The boys laughed for several minutes. After that I would read the scripts and get an idea of what little plot there was, but I never took too much time learning my lines because there was no sense to it. In our second movie, *Road to Zanzibar*, there was a scene where we were heading off on a safari. It was shot seven times with at least five pages of extemporaneous dialogue. Bing and Bob had different ad libs for all seven takes!"

An only child, she was born in 1914 in New Orleans. Her family name was Slaton, but when her mother re-married she took her step-father's name, Lambour. She was only 14 when she was crowned Miss New Orleans.

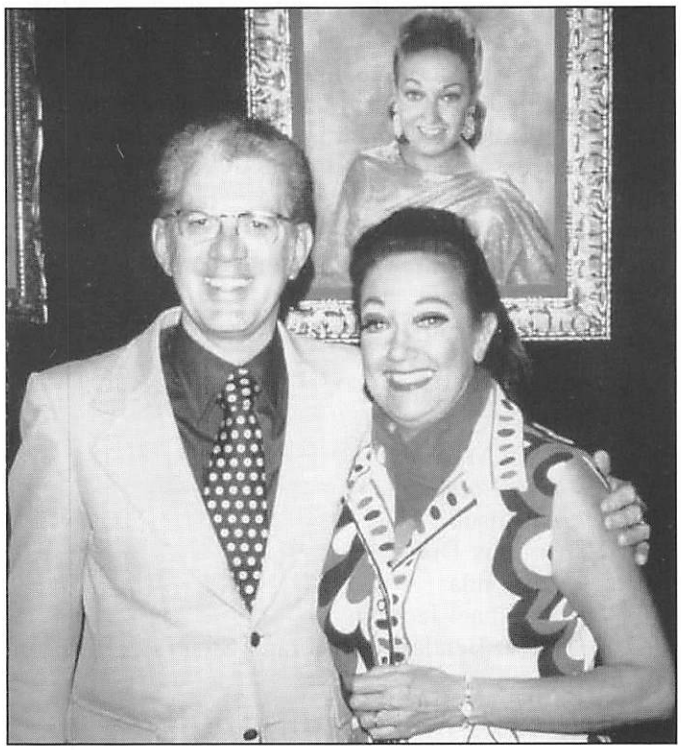
A few years later at the urging of her friends, she decided to pursue her love of music as a singer and moved with her mother to Chicago. While waiting to be discovered she took a job at a department store as an elevator operator. A short time later she was offered a job by bandleader Herbie Kay, who became her first husband. He eventually recommended her to his friend Rudy Vallee, who featured her with his orchestra at top hotels until she embarked on a solo career.

When I spent an afternoon with Bob Hope in 1985

at his Toluca Lake estate, he told me that he first met his favourite leading lady in New York: "I was appearing in *Roberta* on Broadway when I went for a walk one night through Greenwich Village and on to Fifth Avenue. I heard music coming from a hotel bar and looked in and saw a beautiful girl leaning against a lamppost singing. I went in and met her, and of course that girl was Dorothy Lamour. Dolores and I had only been recently married and we went several nights after that to see her. Then she went to Hollywood to star in her first picture and I arrived at Paramount the following year."

In radio and films Dorothy worked with other comics developing her flair for comedy. "Jack Benny was an angel and so was Edgar Bergen. It was Charlie McCarthy who first called me 'Dottie'. I also worked with Ed Wynn and Milton Berle. But I was never quite as comfortable with anyone as I was with Bing and Bob. I think Bob and I are a little alike because we both love to work. I love Bob and Bing dearly."

"One of the funniest things that happened when we were making the *Road* movies, was one day when Bing's boys came on the set and saw him leaning back in a director's chair. I looked over my shoulder and saw one of them fling a lasso over their dad's chair - then the four of them pulled him across the floor while we all laughed. Bing, after his first wife Dixie died, was father and mother to those boys for a long time."



Gord with Dottie in 1974

After the famous trio travelled to *Singapore* and *Zanzibar*, their comedy destinations took them on the roads to *Morocco*, *Utopia*, *Rio*, *Bali* and *Hong Kong* (in the last film of the series she only appeared in a cameo role). I wondered if one of their celluloid romps was a particular favourite? "No, I loved them all! As a matter of fact I had so much fun I should have paid them to do those pictures."

During the war time years she toured military bases extensively to entertain the men and women in uniform and worked tirelessly selling war bonds. "I was given a citation by the US Treasury Department for the sale of over $300 million in bonds. At bond auctions one of my sarongs raised $50,000 and another one was sold for the war effort for $30,000. But I must say I was amazed when the first sarong I wore in *Jungle Princess* was placed in Washington's Smithsonian Institute."

Her screen image was so closely linked to Polynesia that she concluded every stage performance with the beautiful Hawaiian word *Aloha*. "I explain to my audiences the meaning of love and friendship that the word conveys. The Hawaiians have always accepted me as one of their own."

Among her most popular films were John Ford's *The Hurricane*, *Johnny Apollo* with Tyrone Power, *Dixie* with Bing and the Hope comedies, *Caught In The Draft*, *My Favourite Brunette* and *They've Got Me Covered*. One of her favourite roles was on stage in a touring production of *Hello Dolly*.

Married to former Air Force officer William Howard, who was a successful business man, they had three sons, John, Richard and William Jr. Their marriage lasted 35 years until his death in 1978.

"I was a very lucky woman," she said at the conclusion of our interview. "I had a caring mother, a devoted husband and three wonderful sons. I had a beautiful life — and thanks to Bing and Bob, a memorable career."

Gord Atkinson

(Editor: Gord's wonderful radio series 'The Crosby Years' remains available and see Trading Post for details).

The Most Popular Entertainer of the Twentieth Century

Jon Oye drew our attention to a website (www.waynesthisandthat.com/mus.htm) maintained by Wayne Schmidt of Southern California which looks at a wide variety of subjects. Mr. Schmidt (aged 53) describes himself as 'a middle-aged nerd' and one of the topics he considers is the most popular entertainer of the Twentieth Century. Let us quote from his site:-

TV Guide's first issue of the 21st century proclaimed that the entertainer of the century was Elvis Presley. They bestowed this honor on him because of his success in music and movies. While I sympathize with their need to select someone who would be recognizable to their current readership, I think their duty to accuracy should have made them select another, more worthy entertainer. The fact that the author of the article was a self-proclaimed Elvis fan and has written two books on Elvis's greatness may have compromised his objectivity. I prefer to look at hard numbers and let them determine the greatest entertainer of the twentieth century.

Using *TV Guide's* criteria that the most popular entertainer was the one who had the greatest success in music and movies, I completed the following analysis:

Because *Billboard* magazine lists how long a song is on the top 40 charts and how high it went on the charts, it is possible to use this information to draw a

trapezoid that represents the song's success. The base of the trapezoid is the total number of weeks the song stays on the chart. The height is the highest ranking the song achieves and the width of the top is the number of weeks it stays at that position. Calculating the area of this trapezoid gives a measure of the song's total popularity. Adding up the areas for all the songs for a particular artist gives a numerical value for his or her overall success. Calculating this number for a number of popular artists and comparing them to Mr. Presley show that he really was "The King"... until you compare his numbers to the king of the first half of the century. Consider the following numbers which represent the sums of the popularity-areas for all the artist's songs. In other words, the higher the number, the great the performer's popularity.

The Rolling Stones	— 12,023
Madonna	— 17,725
Elton John	— 18,507
The Beatles	— 19,693
Elvis Presley	— 33,415

These numbers point out how phenomenal Elvis Presley's career was. For comparison, the average successful music group (one #1 song, a couple of #2s and #3s and several lesser songs) would only have a total of 1000.

However, *TV Guide* was talking about the entertainer of the century and these only cover the second half. Was there anyone in the first half who could challenge these numbers? Yes. Several bands, Paul Whiteman, Glenn Miller and Benny Goodman's, as well as Frank Sinatra and Perry Como have total-popularity numbers in the 15,000 to 30,000 zone. But... there is one entertainer whose success so eclipses everyone else's that he is in a class by himself... Bing Crosby. His total-popularity number is: **125,899**

That's over three times as much as Elvis Presley. You'd have to combine the total popularity of The Rolling Stones, Elton John, Madonna, The Beatles and Elvis in one entertainer to be on par with Mr. Crosby. This degree of popularity is staggering. Nothing like this has happened in the second half of the century so people of my era, the fifty-somethings or younger, have no way to appreciate it.

But, the *TV Guide* article also stated Elvis Presley's claim to be the entertainer of the century was based on the thirty movies he'd made. Again, he comes up a poor second to Bing Crosby who made twice that many. Also, whereas Elvis was never considered for even a nomination for an award, Bing Crosby won an Oscar for his performance in *Going My Way.*

Here are the hard numbers comparing Elvis to Bing Crosby. Decide for yourself who was the greater entertainer.

category	**Elvis Presley**	**Bing Crosby**
-weeks at #1	75	173
-# top 30 hits	85	383
-# number 1 hits	18	41
-consecutive weeks at the #1 position	16 (1956)	23 (1944)
-most songs in top 30 in one year	10 (1956)	27 (1939)
-total points	33,415	125,899
-acted in movies	31 (no awards)	60 (Academy Award)

I believe this clearly shows that Bing Crosby and not Elvis Presley deserves to be coronated as the *Greatest Entertainer of the Twentieth Century.* The only reason Elvis was picked is that he was recent enough to be more easily remembered.

Wayne Schmidt

Wow! Well, who are we to disagree with this impartial assessment?

We stumbled on another site that was relevant too (www.vandammeford.com/cford/music) and this was put together by our member, Chuck Ford of Venice, Florida using the statistics produced by Joel Whitburn in his series of popular books. The site's preamble follows:

A CENTURY OF POP RECORDING ARTISTS 1900-1999

An annual rating of the top ten pop recording artists summarized by the top fifty of the century. The annual ratings are compiled by counting the number of chart hits achieved by each artist for that year weighted by the top position of each hit. The century ratings are compiled by counting the number of times each artist appears in the annual ratings weighted by their ranking in each year. Numerous changes in society as well as the recording industry over the years have made it increasingly difficult for artists to maintain long term high levels on the charts. A progressive weighting factor has been added to the century rating points as compensation for this. The results may not be perfect, but they offer a pretty consistent barometer of the relative popularity of each artist.

1. Bing Crosby
2. Elvis Presley
3. Paul Whiteman
4. Perry Como
5. Billy Murray
6. Guy Lombardo
7. Al Jolson
8. Tommy Dorsey
9. Madonna
10. Michael Jackson

11. The Beatles 15. Frank Sinatra 16. Elton John

22. Glenn Miller

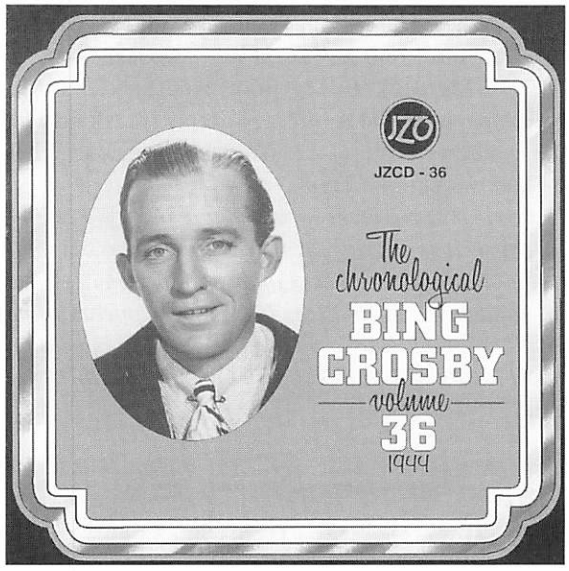
Another unprejudiced review. Well done, Chuck. Statistics don't lie after all!

Keeping Track

It's That Most Wonderful Time Of The Year! No, not a left over from Christmas, even if it is the title of a winter song. For me, there is no better time of the year than the spring, with its wondrous sense of things to come. Speaking of which, look out for the following ways of adding foliage to your Crosby collection as Ken Crossland takes a look at the new releases.

COMPACT DISCS

Best news of all is that the wonderful series of Chronological releases has overcome its recent hiatus and after a gap of almost a year, Volumes 36 & 37 are now available.



The Chronological Bing Crosby Volume 36 **J o n z o**
JZCD-36 **UK** **£10.55**

1. Iowa * 2. Iowa (AFRS Programme) * 3. Welcome To My Dream 4. It's Anybody's Spring 5. Let Me Call You Sweetheart 6. Sleigh Ride In July (A) * 7. Sleigh Ride In July (B) * 8. A Friend Of Yours 9. Would You? (A) * 10. Would You? (B) 11. Just A Prayer Away * 12 My Mother's Waltz 13. Beautiful Love 14. Dear Friend * 15. Don't Fence Me In (A) (with the Andrews Sisters) 16. Don't Fence Me In (reject) (with the Andrews Sisters) 17. The Three Caballeros (A) (with the Andrews Sisters) 18. The Three Caballeros (reject) (with the Andrews Sisters) 19. (Yip Yip De Hootie) My Baby Said Yes (L3477-A) (with Louis Jordan) 20. (Yip Yip De Hootie) My Baby Said Yes (L3478-A) (with Louis Jordan) 21. Your Socks Don't Match (A) (with Louis Jordan) 22 .Your Socks Don't Match (B) (with Louis Jordan) 23. Your Socks Don't Match (reject) (with Louis Jordan) *

* = new to CD

The Chronological Bing Crosby Volume 37 **Jonzo JZCD-37** **UK** **£10.55**

1. You've Got Me Where You Want Me (with Judy Garland) 2. Mine (A) (with Judy Garland) 3. Mine (C) (with Judy Garland) * 4. Evelina (A) 5. Evelina (C) * 6. The Eagle And Me (A) 7. The Eagle And Me (E[B]) 8. Let's Take The Long Way Home * 9. Out Of This World 10. There's A Fella Waiting in Poughkeepsie (A) (with the Andrews Sisters) 11. There's A Fella Waiting in Poughkeepsie (B) (with the Andrews Sisters) 12. Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate The Positive (A) (with the Andrews Sisters) 13. Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate The Positive (B) (with the Andrews Sisters) * 14. Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate The Positive (C) (with the Andrews Sisters) * 15. Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate The Positive (reject) (with the Andrews Sisters) 16. Put It There, Pal (A) (with Bob Hope) 17. Put It There, Pal (B) (with Bob Hope) * 18. Put It There, Pal (T) (with Bob Hope) 19. Road To Morocco (A) (with Bob Hope) 20. Road To Morocco (B) (with Bob Hope) * 21. Road To Morocco (T) (with Bob Hope) 22. Strange Music 23. June Comes Around Every Year 24. More And More (A) 25. More And More (B) *

* = new to CD

This series of discs of course is very much for the collector, because the producer, John McNicholas goes to great lengths to present <u>everything</u> - which means every take, including any rehearsals or blow-ups that are available. So, on Volume 37 you will find three versions of "Put It There Pal" and "Road To Morocco", two of which have been readily available for some time, but the third, in both cases, was new to me. Wonderful to have everything so easily to hand, and I also support John's quest for authenticity - all the tracks on these discs are from original sources, which means 78s. That said, sound quality and remastering remains meticulous. A great series of releases that deserves our support. Available from Jonzo Records, PO Box 212, Harrow, Middlesex HA3 7LD.

(Editor: Arne Fogel has pointed out that the 'T' take of 'Road to Morocco' is the first part of the alternate take contained on the MCA CD Bob Hope & Friends - MCAD 10611 - and he was quite rightly puzzled by it. The take used on the Jonzo CD is undoubtedly genuine which suggests that the take on the Bob Hope album was 'manufactured' by using bits and pieces from the transcription disc. Similarly the Bob Hope CD contains an expanded version of the 'T' take of 'Put It There, Pal' as the MCA engineers have added some pre-recording dialogue and a false start.)

Radio Stars Of America **Living Era CD AJA5590** **UK** **£6.99**

1. Trading Songs/Blue Skies (with Jimmy Durante) 2. Crazy About Singing Commercials (with Peter Lorre) 3. The Mindreaders (with William Frawley) 4. Amateur Song Writers (with Judy Garland) 5. Your Flop Parade (with Ethel Merman) 6. Lay That Parcel Down/Oh What A Beautiful Morning (with Joan Davis) 7. San Fernando Valley (with Roy Rogers) 8. Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey Reunite (with Tommy & Jimmy Dorsey) 9. Don't Fence Me In (with the Andrews Sisters)

This is an interesting and unusual release in that it is a selection of musical sketches drawn from Bing's Kraft Music Hall and

Philco series - in the past, we have had songs from radio and indeed complete shows, but an album of sketches is less common. Sound quality is good and the material is not commonly heard and almost certainly, most of the items, excepting the well-heralded "Flop Parade" are on CD for the first time.

Stardust **HOT HRS008** **UK** **£6.99**

1. Mississippi Mud (W400034A) 2. Dinah (with the Mills Brothers) 3. Shine (with the Mills Brothers) 4. My Honey's Lovin' Arms (with the Mills Brothers) 5. You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby 6. Try A Little Tenderness 7. Young And Healthy 8. Where The Blue Of The Night (E37373-B) 9. Love Is Just Around The Corner 10. Mexicali Rose 11. Swinging On A Star 12. Don't Fence Me In (with the Andrews Sisters) 13. Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral 14. McNamara's Band 15. Galway Bay 16. Stardust (1931) 17. Chattanoogie Shoeshine Boy 18. Alexander's Ragtime Band (with Al Jolson)

Nothing too original here on this CD from the Hot Record Society, largely because these titles are in the main taken from the years already covered by the Chronological series.

Home On The Range
Universal CCC-9108 **Japan** **c$22.00**

1. Home On The Range 2. When The Bloom Is On The Sage 3. I'm An Old Cowhand 4. There's A Gold Mine In The Sky 5. Mexicali Rose 6. Silver On The Sage 7. Take Me Back To My Boots And Saddle 8. My Little Buckaroo 9. Cool Water (with the Andrews Sisters) 10. Along The Navajo Trail (with the Andrews Sisters) 11. You Don't Know What Lonesome Is 12. Blue Shadows On The Trail

I mentioned this one last time, but a copy is now to hand and it's a quaint little release, quaint because it is literally a recreation of the original vinyl LP, complete with cardboard sleeve and paper inner sleeve containing the lyrics in Japanese and English. The source appears to be a vinyl master but sound is good, and if like me, you have nostalgic memories of the original LP (it was I think my fifth Crosby LP), then you may not be able to resist!

Bing Crosby Sings Country - Home On the Range **Dynamic DYN 2121** **EU** **£3.99 / $3.99 / A$12.95**

1. Home On The Range 2. Don't Fence Me In (with the Andrews Sisters) 3. New San Antonio Rose 4. Deep In The Heart Of Texas 5. Sioux City Sue 6. San Fernando Valley 7. The Last Round Up 8. Tumbling Tumbleweeds 9. Sierra Sue 10. Pistol Packin' Mama (with the Andrews Sisters) 11. Along The Navajo Trail (with the Andrews Sisters) 12. Mule Train 13. I'm An Old Cowhand 14. The Singing Hills 15. Ridin' Down The Canyon 16. Take Me Back To My Boots And Saddle

Some overlap with the previous CD with this 'cheapie' which seems to have popped up all over the world.

Bing Crosby - The Christmas Album (Pop-up) **METRCDXP014** **UK** **£4.99**

1. Happy Holiday 2. White Christmas 3. Faith Of Our Fathers 4. God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen 5. Adeste Fideles 6. Here Comes Santa Claus (with the Andrews Sisters) 7. I'll Be Home For Christmas 8. The First Noel 9. You're All I Want For Christmas 10. Deck The Halls/Away In A Manger/O Little Town Of Bethlehem/The First Noel 11. Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer 12. Santa Claus Is Coming To Town (with the Andrews Sisters) 13. Silent Night 14. Silver Bells (with Carole Richards) 15. Sleigh Ride In July 16. Jingle Bells (with the Andrews Sisters) 17. Twelve Days Of Christmas (with the Andrews Sisters) 18. Let's Start The New Year Right

This is a Christmas left over and familiar fare, although it warrants a mention in that you also get a "3D pop-up" as well as the CD. Whatever turns you on, I guess.

That Christmas Feeling **Rajon CDRTV0169** **Australia A$17.99 (inc. GST)**

1. White Christmas 2. Silent Night 3. Adeste Fideles 4. Faith Of Our Fathers 5. God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen 6. Jingle Bells (With the Andrews Sisters) 7. Santa Claus Is Coming To Town (With the Andrews Sisters) 8. I'll Be Home For Christmas 9. The Christmas Song 10. Here Comes Santa Claus (With the Andrews Sisters) 11. The First Noel 12. Twelve Days Of Christmas (With the Andrews Sisters) 13. Medley: (a) Deck The Halls (b) Away In A Manger (c) I Saw Three Ships 14. Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer 15. That Christmas Feeling 16. Mele Kalikimaka (With the Andrews Sisters) 17. Silver Bells (With Carole Richards) 18. Christmas In Killarney 19. It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas 20. Let's Start The New Year Right

And in Australia, the Rajon company have issued a nice CD with the usual favourites.

Whilst we are on the subject of Christmas left-overs, "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas" turned up for $7.98 on the Liquid 8 label in the USA, but it's one of those CDs that fails to do what it says on the cover because the ten tracks do not include the apparent title song. What you do get are tracks from Bing's Decca recordings, circa 1950.

Burl Ives - The Golden Years of The Wayfaring Stranger Jasmine JASBOX 14-4 UK £15.99
CD2
Careless Love (20/11/46) - I'm Goin' Down The Road (20/11/46) - Hey Liley Liley Lo (23/4/47) - I'm Goin' Down The Road (23/4/47) - Sweet Betsy From Pike (22/10/47) - Clementine (22/10/47) - Clementine (also with Dinah Shore - 2/3/49) - The Little White Duck (16/5/51) - On Top of Old Smokey (27/6/51)
This 4CD set has been produced by Geoff Milne and is a comprehensive collection of Burl Ives' work for Decca. There is an extra bonus for us in that CD2 contains all of his songs from his five appearances on Bing's radio show, including their duets together as shown above.

Last and by no means least, if you are a UK member looking for a local source for the "Swingin' With Bing" 3-CD set, the good news is that it's now available via HMV UK; the bad news is that it still costs an arm and a leg, or failing that, something around £50. In view of the weak dollar rate, it's still cheaper to buy it direct from the USA and pay the £7.90 VAT and Post Office charge. Editor Malcolm will get it for you if you don't have any Internet links yourself or through friends or relatives.

DVD

DVD releases have been a little thin on the ground this last quarter, with the two items below being the highlight.

Christmas with Crosby & Kate Smith Koch Vision USA $9.98
This is a black & white kinescope (which usually means poorish quality) copy of the Hollywood Palace show from 24 December 1966, hosted by Bing, together with his family. Kate Smith headed the usual variety cast list. Looking at reviews on the Internet, this would not seem to be one of the greatest Christmas shows, although probably still of interest to UK readers, as we never saw a full HP show over here. Some of this show was raided for the PBS "Christmas At The Hollywood Palace" programme that aired in December and is covered elsewhere in this issue .

Merry Christmas from Sinatra & Crosby Koch Vision USA $9.98
This DVD comes from the same stable and is a re-issue of the Sinatra Show from 1957 which featured Bing as the solitary guest, and which saw its first release in colour at Christmas 2003. A good show, but lacking in sparkle, and the original release is probably still the one to go for because of the extras, including the producer's recollections of the recording of the show which revealed two diametrically opposite working styles between the Groaner and the Voice.

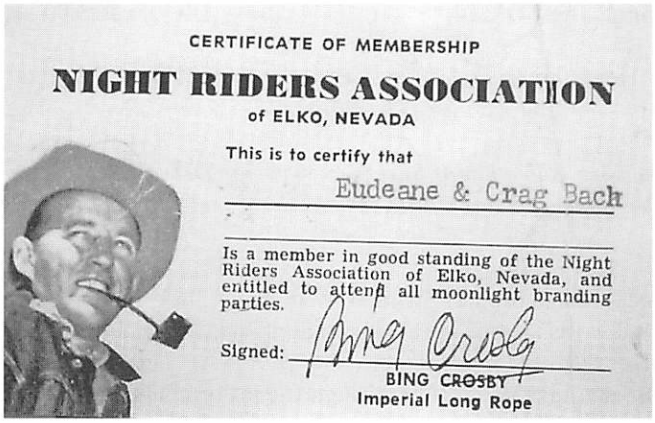
On the Road With Bob Hope and Bing Crosby
(Road to Singapore/Road to Zanzibar/Road to Morocco/Road to Utopia)
The Franchise Collection USA (Region 1) $15.98
The early "Road" pictures have been around long enough on DVD for most people to have them, but just in case you are just unpacking your first DVD player, here's a very economical way to get your collection going. The set has the four films, but little else, but at around $4 per film, it's difficult to complain.

The Bing Crosby Show Bach Films France 7 Euros
Derek McNamee came across this DVD in Paris recently and it contains the entire Edsel Show from 1957 with extensive adverts included. There are French subtitles throughout. Extras include a Cab Calloway short plus Duke Ellington and Count Basie at Newport. For those on the Internet, you can see further details at www.bachfilms.com

From Japan comes news of two single DVD releases of *Blue Skies* and *Birth Of The Blues*, although since both have been available for some time on a double release, there's little to add. However, if you are Japanese, they do come with Japanese subtitles! Catalogue details are JVD-3038 and 3039, and the best source is www.cdjapan.co.jp.
There's also **Grace Kelly: American Princess,** described as a "concise documentary that uses a mix of family photos, fashion and advertising shots, clips from her 11 Hollywood films" that ought to feature something about Bing, although I seem to recall one TV company managing to produce a biopic about Grace with no reference to Bing whatsoever! Best source is Amazon.com.
Finally, on the DVD front, our attention was drawn to the apparent issue in the USA by Varese Sarabande Records of *A Little Bit Of Irish*, the TV show Bing recorded in Ireland in 1966 which was shown on St. Patrick's Day 1967. This was exciting news but further enquiries with the Customer Service section of the company revealed that it had been necessary for the release to be "put on hold indefinitely." Presumably there were copyright or royalty problems.

WHAT'S ON THE WEB?

The most noticeable piece of auction trivia in the last few weeks has been this membership card for the "Night Riders Association of Elko, Nevada", signed by our man in his capacity as "Imperial Long Rope". I must say that "night riders" and "long rope" conjures up some unsavoury images from the past in the American south, but I'm sure it was an all together more innocent venture as membership seems to have been offered to anyone who stayed at Bing's Elko ranch. If you know any more about it - indeed if you know someone who might have been a member - we'd love to hear from you.
And finally, one item from last time to clear up, with thanks due to Peter Howard and Ernest Sutkowski. You may recall that I had spotted a disc on eBay by Lindsay Crosby "& Friend" and wondered if the friend might be Bing. Well, sadly not, as the friend turns out to be Johnny Mercer. The two tracks were recorded in 1965, and the duet item is a pleasant song, sung to the tune of "Auld Lang Syne" and featuring Lindsay in a pleasant, rich vocal, very much in the family tradition.



CERTIFICATE OF MEMBERSHIP

NIGHT RIDERS ASSOCIATION

of ELKO, NEVADA

This is to certify that

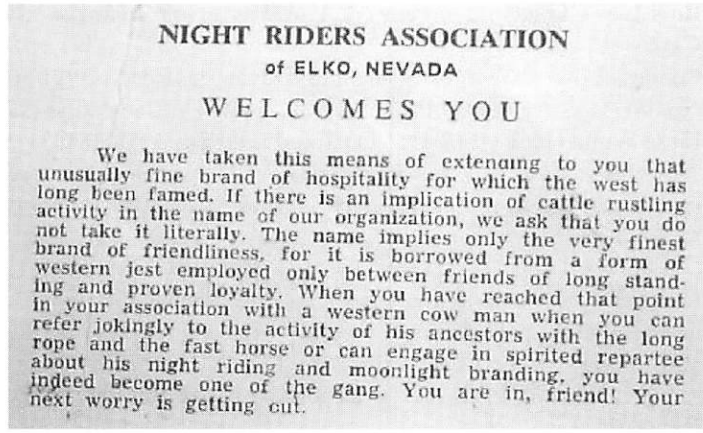
Eudeane & Crag Bach

Is a member in good standing of the Night Riders Association of Elko, Nevada, and entitled to attend all moonlight branding parties.

Signed: Bing Crosby

BING CROSBY

Imperial Long Rope



NIGHT RIDERS ASSOCIATION

of ELKO, NEVADA

WELCOMES YOU

We have taken this means of extending to you that unusually fine brand of hospitality for which the west has long been famed. If there is an implication of cattle rustling activity in the name of our organization, we ask that you do not take it literally. The name implies only the very finest brand of friendliness, for it is borrowed from a form of western jest employed only between friends of long standing and proven loyalty. When you have reached that point in your association with a western cow man when you can refer jokingly to the activity of his ancestors with the long rope and the fast horse or can engage in spirited repartee about his night riding and moonlight branding, you have indeed become one of the gang. You are in, friend! Your next worry is getting out.

Happy listening!

Ken Crossland
ken@kencrossland.co.uk
www.kencrossland.co.uk

(Editor: Our thanks to Ken for his comprehensive round-up. As we went to print, we were advised that the UK based Avid company will be putting out a 4CD set later this year containing Bing's Musical Autobiography album plus several extras including all the songs from Bing's Mack Sennett shorts. Further details in due course. Also Geoff Milne tells me that he is working on a 2-CD set called 'The Crosby Brothers' which will feature Bing and Bob Crosby together and separately. This should be a very nice issue.)

Bing Looks Ahead

Alan Matheson of Vancouver, British Columbia sent us a copy of the November, 1946 edition of *Metronome*. This came out following Bing's successful launch of his transcribed Philco show and Barry Ulanov assessed the implications.

Don't look now, but NBC and CBS's slips are showing. There is a kind of supersonic indignation mounting the offices of the Sarnoffs and the Paleys and their underlings as they realize that their seams are wide open. And you know who opened the stitches and let the garment fall? Why none other than their old friend, and ours, Harry Lillis Crosby.

This is what it's all about. On Wednesday evening October 16, over the complete American Broadcasting Company network, where millions of people could hear it, the new Philco program made its debut. It started with Bing Crosby emceeing and singing just as he used to in the old days for Kraft. Bob Hope was the first guest, trading the usual insults with his Paramount Pictures colleague. John Scott Trotter supplied the amiable background, piloting the click studio band with the selfsame rotund grace which decorated the Crosby shows last year and the year before and before and before. But it wasn't the same, not by an augmented thirteenth it wasn't. It was all weeks old. Bing and Bob had gone through their lines weeks earlier. The singing and playing and commercials were more than a month old. And so were Spike Jones' and Red Ingle's antics the next week; and so were Rafael Mendez's trumpet the week after that. Old. Old because it was all transcribed, put between grooves on big sixteen-inch, 33 1/3 RPM platters and locked away until broadcast time. Done four broadcasts at a time (not one day, but one week), the Bing Crosby show will be E.T. (electrically transcribed) as long as it maintains a Hooper rating of some distinction. And since the Bing Crosby show has never rated below the top couple of dozen in the past, why should it now?

Some of the old-line skeptics in radio are unhappy. They say that masses of radio listeners will turn their sets oft as soon as they hear the discouraging words, "The following program is transcribed.' It won't be real, they insist, as soon as Jehosephat T. Public knows that the boys are just a collection of scratches in the vinyl. Fiddle-faddle, rubbish and bunk! West of Chicago, all during the summer, eight out of ten big shows were transcribed from network lines for presentation at later hours because of the conflicts in time occasioned by the fact that only 19 states were on Daylight Saving Time, the big Eastern States. Since they constitute almost 50% of the radio advertisers market, their time could not be disturbed. But Colorado's and Iowa's and California's hours couldn't really be changed either: if the programs had been taken live right off the line, Los Angeles would have been listening to the big shows four hours earlier than New York, and that often would be the middle of the afternoon for shows clearly meant for early evening. So the stuff was recorded and the announcers bringing on the records allowed as how it was a transcription, because the Federal Communications Commission says they have to, and nobody—not one listener—squawked. And that's how it's going to be with the new transcribed Crosby show.

You realize what this means for network radio, of course. It means there doesn't have to be a network at all. It would be a cinch to make the transcriptions, press a couple of hundred or more of them, and then send them to 200 or more independent stations all around the country. They all have turntables and pickups and amplifiers. Their reproduction of the discs would be just as good, just as faithful, as the big network stations. Why pay a big extra price for a string of stations controlled by NBC or CBS or even ABC or Mutual, when you can get more outlets for less dough at better times? So you can see why the moguls and mahatmas of radio are worried. NBC isn't going to hold together just because it has good newsrooms in New York and San Francisco. CBS isn't going to stay a chain because of Arthur Godfrey and Invitation to Learning, good as these shows may be. Now Sinatra is mulling over the transcription deal. Sooner or later everybody who's ever been inside a recording studio and knows the advantages of controlled performances will be for it. That means a lot of singers and comedians and bandleaders and even soap operators. And remember, in addition to the signal advantage of being able to straighten out the kinks and erase the fluffs, it removes the necessity for night - time work, for weekly appearances and all the other limitations of live broadcasting. As soon as he had finished his first four shows and done all the retakes for the *Emperor Waltz* at Paramount, Bing went happily off on vacation, taking gun and fishing tackle and old clothes, but not mike or camera. Don't think that isn't a big lure the wax medium has that the flesh and blood hasn't.

We all know network radio has been guilty of one lapse in taste after another. We know that its only standards are the greenback and such others as the FCC and mass polls impose upon it. In the particular province of this magazine, radio has been so lamentable that only when it acts as a phonograph, winds up its turntable and puts needle on record does it fulfill a serious musical function, with occasional time out for a sponsored symphony orchestra or a jazz band playing way under wraps. Those few of us who naively continue to believe in progress in the arts would love to see the networks collapse of the weight of their own invention, the electrical transcription. We would take savage glee in seeing more artists make their sponsors and the broadcasters pay through the nose for the privilege of selling toothpaste, cheese, radios, cigarettes, and laxatives by way of Hope, Crosby, Como, Sinatra, Drew Pearson, etc.

Bing with Nat King Cole and Eddy Duchin in the radio studio.

Bing made Philco and ABC say "Uncle." In addition to a lusty salary every week to the singer, the sponsor has to give Gonzaga University, Bing's alma mater, a S30,000 donation. The broadcasting company has to give Bing and his representatives, notably his brother Everett, control of the half-hour before his show and the thirty minutes after it. That is, Everett can keep gangster melodrama off the air before Bing and after him, he can see to it that only programs likely to bring a Crosby audience to ABC between 8:30 and 10 EDT, Wednesday nights, will get time surrounding Bing's half-hour. Next year, look for a reversal of letters of the network to BCA, Bing Crosby Association, so nobody will tune in to that web without realizing that Bing is on it.

Bing hasn't yet made a frontal attack on the motion picture industry, and it isn't likely that he will. But even here he is committing mild mayhem on ancient strictures and clumsy conventions. At present standing, his two films with Leo McCarey about the life and times

of Father O'Malley, *The Bells of St. Mary's* and *Going My Way,* stand third and fourth in that order in the list of the biggest grossers at the box office since there have been films. And that proves very nicely that the screen can be occupied for two hours at a time by friends rather than lovers, and that God doesn't have to be represented by clouds and a chorus of ascending female voices in the background. Bing's own independent film outfit has just finished *Abie's Irish Rose,* vigorously underlining its inherent plea for religious and racial tolerance. That's more than casually removed from the beaten track of the movie lot, in spite of the hackneyed quality of the vehicle.

In all of this there's a lot of comfort for a lot of people. For the performer starting out in life, who wants to look forward to more than just an endless series of dishonest performances and executive directives from men who don't know a chord from a piece of string. For every one of their professional associates who shares any part of this uncommon sensibility. And for the much abused, much maligned but still eager and expectant public.

Barry Ulanov

Helen Crawford

Stan White looks at one of the rarest of Bing's accompanists.

Helen Crawford provided the backing for Bing on his recordings of 'Can't We Talk It Over?' and 'I Found You' on December 21, 1931. The former song has been on release somewhere in the world ever since its first issue in 1932 whilst the latter track was notable for its rarity as a 78.

Helen with her famous husband, Jesse Crawford, featured the 4 manual 36 pipe rank Wurlitzer in the auditorium of the Paramount Theatre in New York. The organ had twin 4 manual consoles to enable the Crawfords to play duets. Bing worked with them in the same programme during his long stint at the Paramount. Wurlitzer had installed a 4 manual, 21 pipe rank organ on the ninth floor of the Paramount building for use by Jesse for all of his hundreds of recordings and broadcasts. It was this 4/21 Studio Wurlitzer that Helen used to accompany Bing on that far-off day in December 1931.

Helen Anderson first met Jesse in 1923 and soon became his third wife. At that time they were playing the Wurlitzer at the Chicago Theatre in Chicago. This was a 4/29 Wurlitzer to which a slave console had been fitted to allow them to play in duet.

Helen Crawford died at the age of 43 in 1943 after the taxi in which she was travelling was involved in a crash. Photographs of Helen Crawford are quite rare, especially from the 1931 era when she worked with Bing. The photograph above shows Helen seated at one of the two consoles of the Paramount Auditorium Wurlitzer. This is how Bing would have known her. There was a floral tribute from Bing at her funeral.

Stan White

Bing retrospective

Martin McQuade has informed us that the Film Society of Lincoln Center in New York is to mount a Bing Crosby retrospective, July 20-26, 2005. This retrospective has been in the planning stages since August, 2003 when Martin suggested to the society that Kathryn Crosby introduce "Road To Utopia" as part of the society's centennial tribute to Bob Hope. The success of that appearance inspired him to recommend that Bing be honoured in a similar fashion. The society was receptive to this idea and since then Mrs. Crosby and Martin have met several times at the film society's offices to plan and co-ordinate this tribute. Mrs. Crosby and Martin have submitted the final selections of film titles and they are assisting in the final preparations.

As we went to press, Martin gave us the good news that Kathryn Crosby is to portray Irving Berlin's wife, Ellin MacKay, in a stage biography of the great songwriter. It is entitled "The Melody Lingers On" and is currently in rehearsal. It is slated to open in Los Angeles in late spring or early summer with possible Broadway prospects.

Bing Crosby

December 30, 1976

Dear Arthur:

Thank you so much for sending me the beautiful tray with the pictures of all the English Kings since England was first a nation.

Of course, there are a couple who have ruled since then who weren't included but I guess they weren't available.

It's a beautiful thing to have, and very useful, too.

We have a fella working for us named Fisher who is quite an authority on all these things. He once was butler for the Duke of Windsor. He was much interested in the tray.

We certainly thank you for it.

I'm glad you liked the Palladium show, and that the album is achieving some currency around England.

I like the "Feels Good, Feels Right" album very much, although I wish I had had a chance to do the title song over again. They played it too slow, really. Dragged out the verse too long.

I use it in the act now as an opening song. It's a great opener, but I picked up the tempo a lot in the verse and it's much more effective.

The engagement in New York was quite successful. Very warm and responsive audiences. We did 13 concerts there, and a lot of TV work, too.

Happy to tell you that the parcel arrived intact and we want to extend to you and your family our warmest greetings -

Sincerely Yours,

Bing Crosby

BC:lm

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